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Rev. Andrew Murray

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The Two Covenants

by
Andrew Murray

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THE TWO COVENANTS

AND THE SECOND BLESSING

BY

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INTRODUCTION

IT is often said that the great aim of the preacher ought to be to translate Scripture truth from its Jewish form into the language and the thought of the nineteenth century, and so to make it intelligible and acceptable to our ordinary Christians. It is to be feared that the experiment will do more harm than good. In the course of the translation the force of the original is lost. The scholar who trusts to translations will never become a master of the language he wants to learn. A race of Christians will be raised up, to whom the language of God's Word, and with that the God who spoke it, will be strange. In the Scripture words not a little of Scripture truth will be lost. For the true Christian life nothing is so healthful and invigorating as to have each man come and study for himself the very words in which the Holy Ghost has spoken.

One of the words of Scripture, which is almost going out of fashion, is the word Covenant. There was a time when it was the keynote of the theology and the Christian life of strong and holy men. We know how deep in Scotland it entered into the national life and thought. It made mighty men, to whom God, and His promise and power were wonderfully real. It will be found still to bring strength and purpose to those who will take the trouble to bring all their life under control of the inspiring assurance that they are living in covenant with a God who has sworn faithfully to fulfil in them every promise He has given.

This book is a humble attempt to show what exactly the blessings are that God has covenanted to bestow on us; what the assurance is the Covenant gives that they must, and can, and will be fulfilled; what the hold on God Himself is which it thus gives us; and what the conditions are for the full and continual experience of its blessings. I feel confident that if I can lead any to listen to what God has to say to them of His Covenant, and to deal with Him as a Covenant God, it will bring them strength and joy:

Not long ago I received from one of my correspondents a letter with the following passage in it:--" I think you will excuse and understand me when I say there is one further note of power I would like so much to have introduced into your next book on Intercession. God Himself has, I know, been giving me some direct teaching this winter upon the place the New Covenant is to have in intercessory prayer . . . I know you believe in the Covenant, and the Covenant rights we have on account of it. Have you followed out your views of the Covenant as they bear upon this subject of intercession? Am I wrong in coming to the conclusion that we may come boldly into God's presence, and not only ask, but claim a Covenant right through Christ Jesus to all the spiritual searching, and cleansing, and knowledge, and power promised in the three great Covenant promises? If you would take the Covenant and speak of it as God could enable you to speak, I think that would be the quickest way the Lord could take to make His Church wake up to the power He has put into our hands in giving us a Covenant. I would be so glad if you would tell God's people that they have a Covenant." Though this letter was not the occasion of the writing of the book, and our Covenant rights have been considered in a far wider aspect than their relation to prayer, I am persuaded that nothing will help us more in our work of intercession, than the entrance for ourselves personally into what it means that we have a Covenant God.

My one great desire has been to ask Christians whether they are really seeking to find out what exactly God wants them to be, and is willing to make them. It is only as they wait, "that the mind of the Lord may be showed them," that their faith can ever truly see, or accept, or enjoy what God calls " His salvation." As long as we expect God to do for us what we ask or think, we limit Him. When we believe that as high as the heavens are above the earth, His thoughts are above our thoughts, and wait on Him as God to do unto us according to His Word, as He means it, we shall be prepared to live the truly supernatural, heavenly life the Holy Spirit can work in us-- the true Christ life.

May God lead every reader into the secret of His presence, and "show him His Covenant."

ANDREW MURRAY.

WELLINGTON, SOUTH AFRICA,

1st November 1898.

CHAPTER I

A Covenant God

"Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments."-DEUT. vii. 9.

MEN often make covenants. They know the advantages to be derived from them. As an end of enmity or uncertainty, as a statement of services and benefits to be rendered, as a security for their certain performance, as a bond of amity and goodwill, as a ground for perfect confidence and friendship, a covenant has often been of unspeakable value.

In His infinite condescension to our human weakness and need, there is no possible way in which men pledge their faithfulness, that God has not sought to make use of, to give us perfect confidence in Him, and the full assurance of all that He, in His infinite riches and power as God, has promised to do to us. It is with this view He has consented to bind Himself by covenant, as if He could not be trusted. Blessed is the man who truly knows God as his Covenant God; who knows what the Covenant promises him; what unwavering confidence of expectation it secures, that all its terms will be fulfilled to him; what a claim and hold it gives him on the Covenant-keeping God Himself. To many a man, who has never thought much of the Covenant, a true and living faith in it would mean the transformation of his whole life. The full knowledge of what God wants to do for him; the assurance that it will be done by an Almighty Power; the being drawn to God Himself in personal surrender, and dependence, and waiting to have it done; all this would make the Covenant the very gate of heaven. May the Holy Spirit give us some vision of its glory.

When God created man in His image and likeness, it was that he might have a life as like His own as it was possible for a creature to live. This was to be by God Himself living and working all in man. For this man was to yield himself in loving dependence to the wonderful glory of being the recipient, the bearer, the manifestation of a Divine life. The one secret of man's happiness was to be a trustful surrender of his whole being to the willing and the working of God. When sin entered, this relation to God was destroyed; when man had disobeyed, he feared God and fled from Him. He no longer knew, or loved, or trusted God.

Man could not save himself from the power of sin. If his redemption was to be effected, God must do it all. And if God was to do it in harmony with the law of man's nature, man must be brought to desire it, to yield his willing consent, and entrust himself to God. All that God wanted man to do was, to believe in Him. What a man believes, moves and rules his whole being, enters into him, and becomes part of his very life. Salvation could only be by faith: God restoring the life man had lost; man in faith yielding himself to God's work and will. The first great work of God with man was to get him to believe. This work cost God more care and time and patience than we can easily conceive. All the dealings with individual men, and with the people of Israel, had just this one object, to teach men to trust Him. Where He found faith He could do anything. Nothing dishonoured and grieved Him so much as unbelief. Unbelief was the root of disobedience and every sin; it made it impossible for God to do His work. The one thing God sought to waken in men by promise and threatening, by mercy and judgment, was faith.

Of the many devices of which God's patient and condescending grace made use to stir up and strengthen faith, one of the chief was --the Covenant. In more than one way God sought to effect this by His Covenant. First of all, His Covenant was always a revelation of His purposes, holding out, in definite promise, what God was willing to work in those with whom the Covenant was made. It was a Divine pattern of the work God intended to do in their behalf, that they might know what to desire and expect, that their faith might nourish itself with the very things, though as yet unseen, which God was working out. Then, the Covenant was meant to be a security and guarantee, as simple and plain and humanlike as the Divine glory could make it, that the very things which God had promised would indeed be brought to pass and wrought out in those with whom He had entered into covenant. Amid all delay and disappointment, and apparent failure of the Divine promises, the Covenant was to be the anchor of the soul, pledging the Divine veracity and faithfulness and unchangeableness for the certain performance of what had been promised. And so the Covenant was, above all, to give man a hold upon God , as the Covenant-keeping God, to link him to God Himself in expectation and hope, to bring him to make God Himself alone the portion and the strength of his soul.

Oh that we knew how God longs that we should trust Him, and how surely His every promise must be fulfilled to those who do so! Oh that we knew how it is owing to nothing but our unbelief that we cannot enter into the possession of God's promises, and that God cannot --yes, cannot--do His mighty works in us, and for us, and through us! Oh that we knew how one of the surest remedies for our unbelief-the divinely chosen cure for it--is the Covenant into which God has entered with us! The whole dispensation of the

Spirit, the whole economy of grace in Christ Jesus, the whole of our spiritual life, the whole of the health and growth and strength of the Church, has been laid down and provided for, and secured in the New Covenant. No wonder that, where that Covenant, with its wonderful promises, is so little thought of, its plea for an abounding and unhesitating confidence in God so little understood, its claim upon the faithfulness of the Omnipotent God so little tested; no wonder that Christian life should miss the joy and the strength, the holiness and the heavenliness which God meant and so clearly promised that it should have.

Let us listen to the words in which God's Word calls us to know, and worship, and trust our Covenant-keeping God --it may be we shall find what we have been looking for: the deeper, the full experience of all God's grace can do in us. In our text Moses says: "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant with them that love Him." Hear what God says in Isaiah: "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall My covenant of peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." More sure than any mountain is the fulfilment of every Covenant promise. Of the New Covenant, in Jeremiah, God speaks: " I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me." The Covenant secures alike that God will not turn from us, nor we depart from Him: He undertakes both for Himself and us.

Let us ask very earnestly whether the lack in our Christian life, and specially in our faith, is not owing to the neglect of the Covenant. We have not worshipped nor trusted the Covenant-keeping God. Our soul has not done what God called us to--"to take hold of His Covenant," " to remember the Covenant"; is it wonder that our faith has failed and come short of the blessing? God could not fulfil His promises in us. If we will begin to examine into the terms of the Covenant, as the title-deeds of our inheritance, and the riches we are to possess even here on earth; if we will think of the certainty of their fulfilment, more sure than the foundations of the everlasting mountains; if we will turn to the God who has engaged to do all for us, who keepeth covenant for ever, our life will become different from what it has been; it can, and will be, all that God would make it.

The great lack of our religion is -we need more of God. We accept salvation as His gift, and we do not know that the only object of salvation, its chief blessing, is to fit us for, and bring us back to, that close intercourse with God for which we were created, and in which our glory in eternity will be found. All that God has ever done for His people in making a covenant was always to bring them to Himself as their chief, their only good, to teach them to trust in Him, to delight in Him, to be one with Him. It cannot be otherwise. If God indeed be nothing but a very fountain of goodness and glory, of beauty and blessedness, the more we can have of His presence, the more we conform to His will, the more we are engaged in His service, the more we have Him ruling and working all in us, the more truly happy shall we be. If God indeed be thereby Owner and Author of life and strength, of holiness and happiness, and can alone give and work it in us, the more we trust Him, and depend and wait on Him, the stronger and the holier and the happier we shall be. And that only is a true and good religious life, which brings us every day nearer to this God, which makes us give up everything to have more of Him. No obedience can be too strict, no dependence too absolute, no submission too complete, no confidence too implicit, to a soul that is learning to count God Himself its chief good, its exceeding joy.

In entering into covenant with us, God's one object is to draw us to Himself, to render us entirely dependent upon Himself, and so to bring us into the right position and disposition in which He can fill us with Himself, His love, and His blessedness. Let us undertake our study of the New Covenant, in which, if we are believers, God is at this moment living and walking with us, with the honest purpose and surrender, at any price, to know what God wishes to be to us, to do in us, and to have us be and do to Him. The New Covenant may become to us one of the windows of heaven through which we see into the face, into the very heart, of God.

Chapter II

The Two Covenants: Their Relation

"It is written, that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondmaid, and one by the freewoman. Howbeit, the one by the bondmaid is born after the flesh; but the son by the freewoman is born through promise. Which things contain an allegory: for these women are two covenants." -GAL. iv. 22-24.

THERE are two covenants, one called the Old, the other the New. God speaks of this very distinctly in Jeremiah, where He says: "The days come, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, not after the covenant I made with their fathers" (Jer. xxxi.). This is quoted in Hebrews, with the addition: "In that He saith a new covenant, He hath made the first old." Our Lord spoke Himself of the New Covenant in His blood. In His dealings with His people, in His working out His great redemption, it has pleased God that there should be two covenants.

It has pleased Him, not as an arbitrary appointment, but for good and wise reasons, which made it indispensably necessary that it should be so, and no otherwise. The clearer our insight into the reasons, and the Divine reasonableness, of there thus being two covenants, and into their relation to each other, the more full and true can be our own personal apprehension of what the New Covenant is meant to be to us. They indicate two stages in God's dealing with man; two ways of serving God, a lower or elementary one of preparation and promise, a higher or more advanced one of fulfilment and possession. As that in which the true excellency of the second consists is opened up to us, we can spiritually enter into what God has prepared for us. Let us try and understand why there should have been two, neither less nor more.

The reason is to be found in the fact that, in religion, in all intercourse between God and man, there are two parties, and that each of these must have the opportunity to prove what their part is in the Covenant. In the Old Covenant man had the opportunity given him to prove what He could do, with the aid of all the means of grace God could bestow. That Covenant ended in man proving his own unfaithfulness and failure. In the New Covenant, God is to prove what He can do with man, all unfaithful and feeble as he is, when He is allowed and trusted to do all the work. The Old Covenant was one dependent on man's obedience, one which he could break, and did break (Jer. xxxi. 32). The New Covenant was one which God has engaged shall never be broken; He Himself keeps it and ensures our keeping it: so He makes it an Everlasting Covenant.

It will repay us richly to look a little deeper into this. This relation of God to fallen man in covenant is the same as it was to unfallen man as Creator. And what was that relation? God proposed to make a man in His own image and likeness. The chief glory of God is that He has life in Himself; that He is independent of all else, and owes what He is to Himself alone. If the image and likeness of God was not to be a mere name, and man was really to be like God in the power to make himself what he was to be, he must needs have the power of free will and self-determination. This was the problem God had to solve in man's creation in His image. Man was to be a creature made by God, and yet he was to be, as far as a creature could be, like God, self-made. In all God's treatment of man these two factors were ever to be taken into account. God was ever to take the initiative, and be to man the source of life. Man was ever to be the recipient, and yet at the same time the disposer of the life God bestowed.

When man had fallen through sin, and God entered into a covenant of salvation, these two sides of the relationship had still to be maintained intact. God was ever to be the first, and man the second. And yet man, as made in God's image, was ever, as second, to have full time and opportunity to appropriate or reject what God gave, to prove how far he could help himself, and indeed be self-made. His absolute dependence upon God was not to be forced upon him; if it was really to be a thing of moral worth and true blessedness, it must be his deliberate and voluntary choice. And this now is the reason why there was a first and a second covenant, that in the first, man's desires and efforts might be fully awakened, and time given for him to make full proof of what his human nature, with the aid of outward instruction and miracles and means of grace, could accomplish. When his utter impotence, his hopeless captivity under the power of sin had been discovered, there came the New Covenant, in which God was to reveal how man's true liberty from sin and self and the creature, his true nobility and God-likeness, was to be found in the most entire and absolute dependence, in God's being and doing all within him.

In the very nature of things there was no other way possible to God than this in dealing with a being whom He had endowed with the Godlike power of a will. And all the weight this reason for the Divine procedure has in God's dealing with His people as a whole, it equally has in dealing with the individual. The two covenants represent two stages of God's education of man and of man's seeking

after God. The progress and transition from the one to the other is not merely chronological or historical; it is organic and spiritual. In greater or lesser degree it is seen in every member of the body, as well as in the body as a whole. Under the Old Covenant there were men in whom, by anticipation, the powers of the coming redemption worked mightily. In the New Covenant there are men in whom the spirit of the Old still makes itself manifest. The New Testament proves, in some of its most important epistles,--especially those to the Galatians, Romans, and Hebrews,-- how possible it is within the New Covenant still to be held fast in the bondage of the Old.

This is the teaching of the passage from which our text is taken. In the home of Abraham, the father of the faithful, Ishmael and Isaac are both found --the one born of a slave, the other of a free woman; the one after the flesh and the will of man, the other through the promise and the power of God; the one only for a time, then to be cast out, the other to be heir of all. A picture held up to the Galatians of the life they were leading, as they trusted to the flesh and its religion, making a fair show, and yet proved, by their being led captive to sin, to be, not of the free but of the bond woman. Only through faith in the promise and the mighty quickening power of God could they, could any of them, be made truly and fully free, and stand in the freedom with which Christ has made us free.

As we proceed to study the two covenants in the light of this and other scriptures, we shall see how they are indeed the Divine revelation of two systems of religious worship, each with its spirit or life-principle ruling every man who professes to be a Christian. We shall see how the one great cause of the feebleness of so many Christians is just this, that the Old Covenant spirit of bondage still has the mastery. And we shall see that nothing but a spiritual insight, with a whole-hearted acceptance, and a living experience, of all the New Covenant engages that God will work in us, can possibly fit for walking as God would have us do.

This truth of there being two stages in our service of God, two degrees of nearness in our worship, is typified in many things in the Old Covenant worship; perhaps nowhere more clearly than in the difference between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place in the temple, with the veil separating them. Into the former the priests might always enter to draw near to God. And yet they might not come too near; the veil kept them at a distance. To enter within that, was death. Once a year the High Priest might enter, as a promise of the time when the veil should be taken away and the full access to dwell in God's presence be given to His people. In Christ's death the veil of the temple was rent, and His blood gives us boldness and power to enter into the Holiest of all and live there day by day in the immediate presence of God. It is by the Holy Spirit, who issued forth from that Holiest of all, where Christ had entered, to bring its life to us, and make us one with it, that we can have the power to live and walk alway with the consciousness of God's presence in us.

It is thus not only in Abraham's home that there were the types of the two covenants, the spirit of bondage and the spirit of liberty, but even in God's home in the temple. The priests had not yet the liberty of access into the Father's presence. Not only among the Galatians, but everywhere throughout the Church, there are to be found two classes of Christians. Some are content with the mingled life, half flesh and half spirit, half self-effort and half grace. Others are not content with this, but are seeking with their whole heart to know to the full what the deliverance from sin and what the abiding full power for a walk in God's presence is, which the New Covenant has brought and can give. God help us all to be satisfied with nothing less.[1]

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[1] See Note A, on the Second Blessing.

NOTE A. -- CHAP. II

The Second Blessing

IN the life of the believer there sometimes comes a crisis, as clearly marked as his conversion, in which he passes out of a life of continual feebleness and failure to one of strength, and victory, and abiding rest. The transition has been called the Second Blessing. Many have objected to the phrase, as being unscriptural, or as tending to make a rule for all, what was only a mode of experience in some. Others have used it as helping to express clearly in human words what ought to be taught to believers as a possible deliverance from the ordinary life of the Christian, to one of abiding fellowship with God, and entire devotion to His service. In introducing it into the title of this book, I have indicated my belief that, rightly understood, the words express a scriptural truth, and may be a help to believers in putting clearly before them what they may expect from God. Let me try and make clear how I think we ought to understand it.

I have connected the expression with the two Covenants. Why was it that God made two Covenants--not one, and not three? Because there were two parties concerned. In the First Covenant man was to prove what he could do, and what he was. In the Second, God would show what He would do. The former was the time of needed preparation; the latter, the time of Divine fulfilment. The same necessity as there was for this in the race, exists in the individual too. Conversion makes of a sinner a child of God, full of ignorance and weakness, without any conception of what the whole-hearted devotion is that God asks of him, or the full possession God is ready to take of him. In some cases the transition from the elementary stage is by a gradual growth and enlightenment. But experience teaches, that in the great majority of cases this healthy growth is not found. To those who have never found the secret of a healthy growth, of victory over sin and perfect rest in God, and have possibly despaired of ever finding it, because all their efforts have been failures, it has often been a wonderful help to learn that it is possible by a single decisive step, bringing them into a right relationship to Christ, His Spirit, and His strength, to enter upon an entirely new life.

What is needed to help a man to take that step is very simple. He must see and confess the wrongness, the sin, of the life he is living, not in harmony with God's will. He must see and believe in the life which Scripture holds out, which Christ Jesus promises to work and maintain in him. As he sees that his failure has been owing to his striving in his own strength, and believes that our Lord Jesus will actually work all in him in Divine power, he takes courage, and dares surrender himself to Christ anew. Confessing and giving up all that is of self and sin, yielding himself wholly to Christ and His service, he believes and receives a new power to live his life by the faith of the Son of God. The change is in many cases as clear, as marked, as wonderful, as conversion. For lack of a better name, that of A Second Blessing came most naturally.

When once it is seen how greatly this change is needed in the life of most Christians, and how entirely it rests on faith in Christ and His power, as revealed in the Word, all doubt as to its scripturalness will be removed. And when once its truth is seen, we shall be surprised to find how, throughout Scripture, in history and teaching, we find what illustrates and confirms it.

Take the twofold passage of Israel through water, first out of Egypt, then into Canaan. The wilderness journey was the result of unbelief and disobedience, allowed by God to humble them, and prove them, and show what was in their heart. When this purpose had been accomplished, a second blessing led them through Jordan as mightily into Canaan, as the first had brought them through the Red Sea out of Egypt.

Or take the Holy Place and the Holiest of All, as types of the life in the two covenants, and equally in the two stages of Christian experience. In the former, very real access to God and fellowship with Him, but always with a veil between. In the latter, the full access, through a rent veil, into the immediate presence of God, and the full experience of the power of the heavenly life. As the eyes are opened to see how terribly the average Christian life comes short of God's purpose, and how truly the mingled life can be expelled by the power of a new revelation of what God waits to do, the types of Scripture will shine with a new meaning.

Or look to the teachings of the New Testament. In Romans, Paul contrasts the life of the Christian under the law with that under grace, the spirit of bondage with the Spirit of adoption. What does this mean but that Christians may still be living under the law and its bondage, that they need to come out of this into the full life of grace and liberty through the Holy Spirit, and that, when first they see the difference, nothing is needed but the surrender of faith, to accept and experience what grace will do by the Holy Spirit.

To the Corinthians, Paul writes of some being carnal, and still babes, walking as men after the flesh; others being spiritual, with spiritual discernment and character. To the Galatians, he speaks of the liberty with which Christ, by the Spirit, makes free from the

law, in contrast to those who sought to perfect in the flesh, what was begun in the Spirit, and who gloried in the flesh; --all to call them to recognise the danger of the carnal, divided life, and to come at once to the life of faith, the life in the Spirit, which alone is according to God's will.

Everywhere we see in Scripture, what the state of the Church at the present day confirms, that conversion is only the gate that leads into the path of life, and that within that gate there is still great danger of mistaking the path, of turning aside, or turning back, and that where this has taken place we are called at once, and with our whole heart, to turn and give ourselves to nothing less than all that Christ is willing to work in us. Just as there are many who have always thought that conversion must be slow, and gradual, and uncertain, and cannot understand how it can be sudden and final, because they only take man's powers into account, so many cannot see how the revelation of the true life of holiness, and the entrance on it by faith out of a life of self-effort and failure, may be immediate and permanent. They look too much to man's efforts, and know not how the second blessing is nothing more nor less than a new vision of what Christ is willing to work in us, and the surrender of faith that yields all to Him.

I would fain hope that what I have written in this book may help some to see that the second blessing is just what they need, is what God by His Spirit will work in them, is nothing but the acceptance of Christ in all His saving power as our strength and life, and is what will bring them into, and fit them for, that full life in the New Covenant, in which God works all in all.

Let me close this note with a quotation from the introduction to a little book just published, Dying to Self: A Golden Dialogue, by William Law, with notes by A.M.: "A great deal has been said against the use of the terms, the Higher Life, the Second Blessing. In Law one finds nothing of such language, but of the deep truth of which they are the, perhaps defective, expression, his book is full. The points on which so much stress is laid in what is called Keswick teaching, stand prominently out in his whole argument. The low state of the average life of believers, the cause of all failure as coming from self-confidence, the need of an entire surrender of the whole being to the operation of God, the call to turn to Christ as the One and Sure Deliverer from the power of self, the Divine certainty of a better life for all who will in self-despair trust Christ for it, and the heavenly joy of a life in which the Spirit of Love fills the heart--these truths are common to both. What makes Law's putting of the truth of special value is the way in which he shows how humility and utter self-despair, with the resignation to God's mighty working in simple faith, is the infallible way to be delivered from self, and have the Spirit of Love born in the heart."

Chapter III

The First Covenant

"Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice, and keep My covenant, ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me."--EX. xix. 5.
"He declared unto you His covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even ten commandments."--DEUT. iv. 13.
"If ye keep these judgments, the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant,"--DEUT. vii. 12.

I" will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, which My covenant they brake."--JER. xxxi. 31, 32.

WE have seen how the reason for there being two Covenants is to be found in the need of giving the Divine and the human will, each their due place in the working out of man's destiny. God ever takes the initiative. Man must then have the opportunity to do his part, and to prove either what he can do, or needs to have done for him. The Old Covenant was on the one hand indispensably necessary to waken man's desires, to call forth his efforts, to deepen the sense of dependence on God, to convince of his sin and impotence, and so to prepare him to feel the need of the salvation of Christ. In the significant language of Paul, "The law was our schoolmaster unto Christ." "We were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith, which should afterwards be revealed." To understand the Old Covenant aright we must ever remember its two great characteristics --the one, that it was of Divine appointment, fraught with much true blessing, and absolutely indispensable for the working out of God's purposes; the other, that it was only provisional and preparatory to something higher, and therefore absolutely insufficient for giving that full salvation which man needs if his heart or the heart of God is to be satisfied.

Note now the terms of this first Covenant. "If ye will obey My voice and keep My covenant, ye shall be unto Me a holy nation." Or, as it is expressed in Jeremiah (vii. 23, xi. 4), "Obey My voice, and I will be your God." Obedience everywhere, especially in the Book of Deuteronomy, appears as the condition of blessing. " A blessing if ye obey" (xi. 27). Some may ask how God could make a covenant of which He knew that man could not keep it. The answer opens up to us the whole nature and object of the Covenant. All education, Divine or human, ever deals with its pupils on the principle --faithfulness in the less is essential to the attainment of the greater. In taking Israel into His training, God dealt with them as men in whom, with all the ruin sin had brought, there still was a conscience to judge of good and evil, a heart capable of being stirred to long after God, and a will to choose the good and to choose Himself. Before Christ and His salvation could be revealed and understood and truly appreciated, these faculties of man had to be stirred and wakened. The law took men into its training, and sought, if I may use the expression, to make the very best that could be made of them by external instruction. In the provision made in the law for a symbolical atonement and pardon, in all God's revelation of Himself through priest and prophet and king, in His interposition in providence and grace, everything was done that He could do, to touch and win the heart of His people and to
give force to the appeal to their self-interest or their gratitude, their fear or their love.

Its work was not without fruit. Under the law, administered by the grace that ever accompanied it, there was trained up a number of men whose great mark was the fear of God, and a desire to walk blameless in all His commandments. And yet, as a whole, Scripture represents the Old Covenant as a failure. The law had promised life; but it could not give it (Deut. iv. 1; Gal. iii. 21). The real purpose for which God had given it was the very opposite: it was meant by Him as "a ministration of death." He gave it that it might convince man of his sin, and might so waken the confession of his impotence, and of his need of a New Covenant and a true redemption. It is in this view that Scripture uses such strong expressions--"By the law is the knowledge of sin: that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may become guilty before God." "The law worketh wrath." "The law entered, that the offence might abound." "That sin by the commandment might appear exceeding sinful." "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." "We were kept under the law, shut up to the faith, which should afterwards be revealed." "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith." The great work of the law was to discover what sin was: its hatefulness as accursed of God; its misery, working temporal and eternal ruin; its power, binding man down in hopeless slavery; and the need of a Divine interposition as the only hope of deliverance.

In studying the Old Covenant we ought ever to keep in mind the twofold aspect under which we have seen that Scripture represents it. It was God's grace that gave Israel the law, and wrought with the law to make it work out its purpose in individual believers and in

the people as a whole. The whole of the Old Covenant was a school of grace, an elementary school, to prepare for the fulness of grace and truth in Christ Jesus. A name is generally given to an object according to its chief feature. And so the Old Covenant is called a ministration of condemnation and death, not because there was no grace in it--it had its own glory (2 Cor. iii. 10-12)--but because the law with its curse was the predominating element. The combination of the two aspects we find with especial clearness in Paul's epistles. So he speaks of all who are of the works of the law as under the curse (Gal. iii. 10). And then almost immediately after he speaks of the law as being our benefactor, a schoolmaster unto Christ, into whose charge, as to a tutor or governor, we had been given, till the time appointed of the Father. We are everywhere brought back to what we said above. The Old Covenant is absolutely indispensable for the preparation work it had to do; utterly insufficient to work for us a true or a full redemption.

The two great lessons God would teach us by it are very simple. The one is the lesson of SIN, the other the lesson of HOLINESS. The Old Covenant attains its object only as it brings men to a sense of their utter sinfulness and their hopeless impotence to deliver themselves. As long as they have not learnt this, no offer of the New Covenant life can lay hold of them. As long as an intense longing for deliverance from sinning has not been wrought, they will naturally fall back into the power of the law and the flesh. The holiness which the New Covenant offers will rather terrify than attract them; the life in the spirit of bondage appears to make more allowance for sin, because obedience is declared to be impossible.

The other is the lesson of Holiness. In the New Covenant the Triune God engages to do all. He undertakes to give and keep the new heart, to give His own Spirit in it, to give the will and the power to obey and do His will. As the one demand of the first Covenant was the sense of sin, the one great demand of the New is faith that that need, created by the discipline of God's law, will be met in a Divine and supernatural way. The law cannot work out its purpose, except as it brings a man to lie guilty and helpless before the holiness of God. There the New finds him, and reveals that same God, in His grace accepting him and making him partaker of His holiness.

This book is written with a very practical purpose. Its object is to help believers to know that wonderful New Covenant of grace which God has made with them, and to lead them into the living and daily enjoyment of the blessed life it secures them. The practical lesson taught us by the fact that there was a first Covenant, that its one special work was to convince of sin, and that without it the New Covenant could not come, is just what many Christians need. At conversion they were convinced of sin by the Holy Spirit. But this had chiefly reference to the guilt of sin and, in some degree, to its hatefulness. But a real knowledge of the power of sin, of their entire and utter impotence to cast it out, or to work in themselves what is good, is what they did not learn at once. And until they have learned this, they cannot possibly enter fully into the blessing of the New Covenant. It is when a man sees that, as little as he could raise himself from the dead, can he make or keep his own soul alive, that he becomes capable of appreciating the New Testament promise, and is made willing to wait on God to do all in him.

Do you, my reader, feel that you are not fully living in the New Covenant, that there is still somewhat of the Old-Covenant spirit of bondage in you?--do come, and let the Old Covenant finish its work in you. Accept its teaching, that all your efforts are failures. As, at conversion, you were content to fall down as a condemned, death-deserving sinner, be content now to sink down before God in the confession that, as His redeemed child, you still feel yourself utterly impotent to do and be what you see He asks of you. And begin to ask whether the New Covenant has not perhaps a provision you have never yet understood for meeting your impotence and giving you the strength to do what is well-pleasing to God. You will find the wonderful answer in the assurance that God, by His Holy Spirit, undertakes to work everything in you. The longing to be delivered from the life of daily sinning, and the extinction of all hope to secure this by our efforts as Christians, will prepare us for understanding and accepting God's new way of salvation--Himself working in us all that is pleasing in His sight.

CHAPTER IV

The New Covenant

"But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."--JER. xxxi. 33, 34.

ISAIAH has often been called the evangelical prophet, for the wonderful clearness with which he announces the coming Redeemer, both in His humiliation and suffering, and in the glory of the kingdom He was to establish. And yet it was given to Jeremiah, in this passage, and to Ezekiel, in the parallel one, to foretell what would actually be the outcome of the Redeemer's work and the essential character of the salvation He was to effect, with a distinctness which is nowhere found in the older prophet. In words which the New Testament (Hebrews viii.) takes as the divinely inspired revelation of what the New Covenant is of which Christ is the Mediator, God's plan is revealed and we are shown what it is that He will do in us, to make us fit and worthy of being the people of which He is the God. Through the whole of the Old Covenant there was always one trouble: man's heart was not right with God. In the New Covenant the evil is to be remedied. Its central promise is a heart delighting in God's law and capable of knowing and holding fellowship with Him. Let us mark the fourfold blessing spoken of.

1. "I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." Let us understand this well. In our inward parts, or in our heart, there are no separate chambers in which the law can be put, while the rest of the heart can be given up to other things; the heart is a unity. Nor are the inward parts and the heart like a house, which can be filled with things of an entirely different nature from what the walls are made of, without any living organic connection. No; the inward parts, the heart, are the disposition, the love, the will, the life. Nothing can be put into the heart, and especially by God, without entering and taking possession of it, without securing its affection and controlling its whole being. And this is what God undertakes to do in the power of His divine life and operation, to breathe the very spirit of His law into and through the whole inward being. "I will put it into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." At Sinai the tables of the Covenant, with the law written on them, were of stone, as a lasting substance. It is easy to know what that means. The stone was wholly set apart for this one thing--to carry and show this Divine writing. The writing and the stone were inseparably connected. And so the heart in which God gets His way, and writes His law in power, lives only and wholly to carry that writing, and is unchangeably identified with it. So alone can God realise His purpose in creation, and have His child of one mind and one spirit with Himself, delighting in doing His will. When the Old Covenant with the law graven on stone had done its work in the discovering and condemning of SIN, the New Covenant would give in its stead the life of obedience and true holiness of heart. The whole of the Covenant blessing centres in this--the heart being put right and fitted to know God: "I will give them an heart to know Me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God; for they shall return unto Me with their whole heart " (Jer. xxiv. 7).

2. "And I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Do not pass these words lightly. They occur chiefly in Jeremiah and Ezekiel in connection with the promise of the everlasting Covenant. They express the very highest experience of the Covenant relationship. It is only when His people learn to love and obey His law, when their heart and life are together wholly devoted to Him and His will, that He can be to them the altogether inconceivable blessing which these words express, " I will be your God." All I am and have as God shall be yours. All you can need or wish for in a God, I will be to you. In the fullest meaning of the word, I, the Omnipresent, will be ever present with you, in all My grace and love. I, the Almighty One, will each moment work all in you by My mighty power. I, the Thrice-Holy One, will reveal My sanctifying life within you. I will be your God. And ye shall be My people, saved and blessed, ruled and guided and provided for by Me, known and seen to be indeed the people of the Holy One, the God of glory. Only let us give our hearts time to meditate and wait for the Holy Spirit to work in us all that these words mean.

3. " And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." Individual personal fellowship with God, for the feeblest and the least, is to be the wonderful privilege of every member of the New Covenant people. Each one will know the Lord. That does not mean the knowledge of the mind,--that is not the equal privilege of all, and that in itself may hinder the fellowship more

than help it,--but with that knowledge which means appropriation and assimilation, and which is eternal life. As the Son knew the Father because He was one with Him and dwelt in Him, the child of God will receive by the Holy Spirit that spiritual illumination which will make God to him the One he knows best, because he loves Him most and lives in Him. The promise, "They shall be all taught of God," will be fulfilled by the Holy Spirit's teaching. God will speak to each out of His Word what he needs to know.

4. "For I will forgive their iniquities, and I will remember their sin no more." The word for shows that this is the reason of all that precedes. Because the blood of this New Covenant was of such infinite worth, and its Mediator and High Priest in heaven of such Divine power, there is promised in it such a Divine blotting out of sin that God cannot remember it. It is this entire blotting out of sin that cleanses and sets us free from its power, so that God can write His law in our hearts, and show Himself in power as our God, and by His Spirit reveal to us His deep things--the deep mystery of Himself and His love. It is the atonement and redemption of Jesus Christ wrought without us and for us, that has removed every obstacle and made it meet for God, and made us meet, that the law in the heart, and the claim on our God, and the knowledge of Him, should now be our daily life and our eternal portion.

Here we now have the Divine summary of the New Covenant inheritance. The last-named blessing, the pardon of sin, is the first in order, the root of all. The second, having God as our God, and the third, the Divine teaching, are the fruit. The tree itself that grows on this root, and bears such fruit, is what is named first--the law in the heart.[2]

The central demand of the Old Covenant, Obey My voice, and I will be your God, has now been met. With the law written in the heart, He can be our God, and we shall be His people. Perfect harmony with God's will, holiness in heart and life, is the only thing that can satisfy God's heart or ours. And it is this the New Covenant gives in Divine power, "I will give them an heart to know Me; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people; for they shall turn to Me with their whole heart." It is on the state of the heart, it is on the new heart, as given by God, that the New Covenant life hinges.

But why, if all this is meant to be literally and exactly true of God's people, why do we see so little of this life, experience so little in ourselves? There is but one answer: Because of your unbelief! We have spoken of the relation of God and man in creation as what the New Covenant is meant to make possible and real. But the law cannot be repealed that God will not compel. He can only fulfil His purpose as the heart is willing and accepts His offer. In the New Covenant all is of faith. Let us turn away from what human wisdom and human experience may say, and ask God Himself to teach us what His Covenant means. If we persevere in this prayer in a humble and teachable spirit, we can count most certainly on its promise: "They shall no more every man teach his neighbour: Know the Lord, for they shall all know Me." The teaching of God Himself, by the Holy Spirit, to make us understand what He says to us in His Word, is our Covenant right. Let us count upon it. It is only by a God-given faith that we can appropriate these God-given promises. And it is only by a God-given teaching and inward illumination that we can see their meaning, so as to believe them. When God teaches us the meaning of His promises in a heart yielded to His Holy Spirit, then alone we can believe and receive them in a power which makes them a reality in our life.

But is it really possible, amid the wear and tear of daily life, to walk in the experience of these blessings? Are they really meant for all God's children? Let us rather ask the question, Is it possible for God to do what He has promised? The one part of the promise we believe--the complete and perfect pardon of sin. Why should we not believe the other part--the law written in the heart, and the direct Divine fellowship and teaching? We have been so accustomed to separate what God has joined together, the objective, outward work of His Son, and the subjective, inward work of His Spirit, that we consider the glory of the New Covenant above the Old to consist chiefly in the redeeming work of Christ for us, and not equally in the sanctifying work of the Spirit in us. It is owing to this ignorance and unbelief of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as the power through whom God fulfils the New Covenant promises, that we do not really expect them to be made true to us.

Do let us turn our hearts away from all past experience of failure, as caused by nothing but unbelief; do let us admit fully and heartily, what failure has taught us, the absolute impossibility of even a regenerate man walking in God's law in his own strength, and then turn our hearts quietly and trustfully to our own Covenant God. Let us hear what He says He will do for us, and believe Him; let us rest on His unchangeable faithfulness and the surety of the Covenant, on His Almighty power and the Holy Spirit working in us; and let us give up ourselves to Him as our God. He will prove that what He has done for us in Christ is not one whit more wonderful than what He will do in us every day by the Spirit of Christ.

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[2] On the law written in the heart, see Note B.

NOTE B. -- CHAP. IV

The Law written in the Heart

THE thought of the law written in the heart sometimes causes difficulty and discouragement, because believers do not see or feel in themselves anything corresponding to it. An illustration may help to remove the difficulty. There are fluids by which you can write so that nothing is visible, either at once or later, unless the writing be exposed to the sun or the action of some chemical. The writing is there, but one who is ignorant of the process cannot think it is there, and knows not how to make it readable. The faith of a man who is in the secret believes in it though he see it not.

It is even thus with the new heart. God has put His law into it, "Blessed are the people in whose heart is God's law." But it is there invisibly. He that takes God's promise in faith, knows that it is in his own heart. As long. as there is not clear faith on this point, all attempts to find it, or to fulfil that law, will be vain. But when by a simple faith the promise is held fast, the first step is taken to realise it. The soul is then prepared to receive instruction as to what the writing of the law in the heart means. It means, first, that God has implanted in the new heart a love of God's law, and a readiness to do all His will. You may not feel this disposition there, but it is there. God has put it there. Believe this, and be assured that there is in you a Divine nature that says--and you therefore do not hesitate to say it--"I delight to do Thy will, O God!" In the name of God, and in faith, say it.

This writing of the law means, further, that in planting this principle in you, God has taken all that you know of God's will already, and inspired that new heart with the readiness to obey it. It may as yet be written there with invisible writing, and you are not conscious of it. That does not matter. You have here to deal with a Divine and hidden work of the Holy Spirit. Be not afraid to say: Oh, how love I Thy law! God has put the love of it into your heart, the new heart. He has taken away the stony heart; it is by the new heart you have to live.

The next thing implied in this writing of the law, is that you have accepted all God's will, even what you do not yet know, as the delight of your heart. In giving yourself up to God, you gave yourself wholly to His will. That was the one condition of your entering the Covenant; Covenant grace will now provide for teaching you to know, and strengthening you to do, all your Father would have you do.

The whole life in the New Covenant is a life of faith. Faith accepts every promise of the Covenant, is certain that it is being fulfilled, looks confidently to the God of the Covenant to do His work. Faith believes implicitly in the new heart, with the law written in it, because it believes in the promise, and in the God who gave and fulfils the promise.

It may be well to add here that the same truth holds good of all the promises concerning the new heart--they must be accepted and acted on by faith. When we read of "the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit," of "Christ dwelling in the heart," of "a clean heart," of "loving each other with a clean heart fervently," of "God establishing our heart unblamable in holiness," we must; with the eye of faith, regard these spiritual realities as actually and in very deed existing within us. In His hidden unseen way God is working them there. Not by sight or feeling, but by faith in the Living God and His Word, we know they are as the power for the dispositions and inclinations of the new heart. In this faith we are to act, knowing that we have the power to love, to obey, to be holy. The New Covenant gives us a God who works all in us; faith in Him gives us the assurance, above and beyond all feeling, that this God is doing His blessed work.

And if the question be asked what we are to think of all there is within us that contradicts this faith, let us remember what Scripture teaches us of it. We sometimes speak of an old and a new heart. Scripture does not do so. It speaks of the old, the stony, heart, being taken away--the heart, with its will, disposition, affections, being made new with a Divine newness. This new heart is placed in the midst of what Scripture calls the flesh, in which there dwelleth no good thing. We shall find it a great advantage to adhere as closely as possible to Scripture language. It will greatly help our faith even to use the very words God by His Holy Spirit has used to teach us. And it will greatly clear our view for knowing what to think of the sin that remains in us if we think of it and deal with it in the light of God's truth. Every evil desire and affection comes from the flesh, man's sinful natural life. It owes its power greatly to our ignorance of its nature, and our trusting to its help and strength to cast out its evil. I have already pointed out how sinful flesh and religious flesh is one, and how all failure in religion is owing to a secret trust in ourselves. As we accept and make use of what God says of the flesh, we shall see in it the source of all evil in us; we shall say of its temptations: "It is no more I, but sin that dwelleth in me"; we shall maintain our integrity as we maintain a good conscience that condemns us for nothing knowingly done against God's will; and we shall be strong in the faith of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in the new heart, so to strengthen that we need not and " shall

not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."

I conclude with an extract of an address by Rev. F. Webster, at Keswick last year, in confirmation of what I have just said: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. 'Make no provision for the flesh.' The flesh is there, you know. To deny or ignore the existence of an enemy is to give him a great chance against you; and the flesh is in the believer to the very end, a force of evil to be reckoned with continually, an evil force inside a man, and yet, thank God, a force which can be so dealt with by the power of God, that it shall have no power to defile the heart or deflect the will. The flesh is in you, but your heart may be kept clean moment by moment in spite of the existence of evil in your fallen nature. Every avenue, every opening that leads into the heart, every thought and desire and purpose and imagination of your being, may be closed against the flesh, so that there shall be no opening to come in and defile the heart or deflect the will from the will of God.

"You say that is a very high standard. But it is the Word of God. There is to be no secret sympathy with sin. Although the flesh is there, you are to make it no excuse for sins. You are not to say, I am naturally irritable, anxious, jealous, and I cannot help letting these things crop up; they come from within. Yes, they come from within, but then there need be no provision, no opening in your heart for these things to enter. Your heart can be barricaded with an impassable barrier against these things. 'No provision for the flesh.' Not merely the front door barred and bolted so that you do not invite them to come in, but the side and back door closed too. You may be so Christ-possessed and Christ-enclosed that you shall positively hate everything that is of the flesh.

"'Make no provision for the flesh.' The only way to do so is to 'put on the Lord Jesus Christ.' I spoke of the heart being so barricaded that there should be no entrance to it, that the flesh should never be able to defile it or deflect the will from the will of God. How can that be done? By putting on the Lord Jesus Christ. It has been such a blessing to me just to learn that one secret, just to learn the positive side of deliverance--putting on the Lord Jesus Christ."

CHAPTER V

The Two Covenants in Christian Experience

"These women are two covenants: one from Mount Sinai, bearing children unto bondage, which is Hagar. Now this Hagar answereth to Jerusalem that now is, for she is in bondage with her children. But the Jerusalem which is above is free, which is our mother. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. With freedom did Christ set us free. Stand fast, therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage."-GAL. iv. 24-81, v. 1.

THE house of Abraham was the Church of God of that age. The division in his house, one son, his own son, but born after the flesh, the other after the promise, was a divinely-ordained manifestation of the division there would be in all ages between the children of the bondwoman, those who served God in the spirit of bondage, and those who were children of the free, and served Him in the Spirit of His Son. The passage teaches us what the whole Epistle confirms: that the Galatians had become entangled with a yoke of bondage, and were not standing fast in the freedom with which Christ makes free indeed. Instead of living in the New Covenant, in the Jerusalem which is from above, in the liberty which the Holy Spirit gives, their whole walk proved that, though Christians, they were of the Old Covenant, which bringeth forth children unto bondage. The passage teaches us the great truth, which it is of the utmost consequence for us to apprehend thoroughly, that a man, with a measure of the knowledge and experience of the grace of God, may prove, by a legal spirit, that he is yet practically, to a large extent, under the Old Covenant. And it will show us, with wonderful clearness; what the proofs are of the absence of the true New Covenant life.

A careful study of the Epistle shows us that the difference between the two Covenants is seen in three things. The law and its works is contrasted with the hearing of faith, the flesh and its religion with the flesh crucified, the impotence to good with a walk in the liberty and the power of the Spirit. May the Holy Spirit reveal to us this twofold life.

The first antithesis we find in Paul's words, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or the hearing of faith?" These Galatians had indeed been born into the New Covenant; they had received the Holy Spirit. But they had been led away by Jewish teachers, and, though they had been justified by faith, they were seeking to be sanctified by works; they were looking for the maintenance and the growth of their Christian life to the observance of the law. They had not understood that, equally with the beginning, the progress of the Divine life is alone by faith, day by day receiving its strength from Christ alone; that in Jesus Christ nothing avails but faith working by love.

Almost every believer makes the same mistake as the Galatian Christians. Very few learn at conversion at once that it is only by faith that we stand, and walk, and live. They have no conception of the meaning of Paul's teaching about being dead to the law, freed from the law-- about the freedom with which Christ makes us free. "As many as are led by the Spirit are not under the law." Regarding the law as a Divine ordinance for our direction, they consider themselves prepared and fitted by conversion to take up the fulfilment of the law as a natural duty. They know not that, in the New Covenant, the law written in the heart needs an unceasing faith in a Divine power, to enable us by a Divine power to keep it. They cannot understand that it is not to the law, but to a Living Person, that we are now bound, and that our obedience and holiness are only possible by the unceasing faith in His power ever working in us. It is only when this is seen, that we are prepared truly to live in the New Covenant.

The second word, that reveals the Old Covenant spirit, is the word "flesh." Its contrast is, the flesh crucified. Paul asks: "Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye made perfect in the flesh?" Flesh means our sinful human nature. At his conversion the Christian has generally no conception of the terrible evil of his nature, and the subtlety with which it offers itself to take part in the service of God. It may be most willing and diligent in God's service for a time; it may devise numberless observances for making His worship pleasing and attractive; and yet this may be all only what Paul calls "making a fair show in the flesh," "glorying in the flesh," in man's will and man's efforts. This power of the religious flesh is one of the great marks of the Old Covenant religion; it misses the deep humility and spirituality of the true worship of God--a heart and life entirely dependent upon Him.

The proof that our religion is very much that of the religious flesh, is that the sinful flesh will be found to flourish along with it. It was thus with the Galatians. While they were making a fair show in the flesh, and glorying in it, their daily life was full of bitterness

and envy and hatred, and other sins. They were biting and devouring one another. Religious flesh and sinful flesh are one: no wonder that, with a great deal of religion, temper and selfishness and worldliness are so often found side by side. The religion of the flesh cannot conquer sin.

What a contrast to the religion of the New Covenant! What is the place the flesh has there? "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with its desires and affections." Scripture speaks of the will of the flesh, the mind of the flesh, the lust of the flesh; all this the true believer has seen to be condemned and crucified in Christ: he has given it over to the death. He not only accepts the Cross, with its bearing of the curse, and its redemption from it, as his entrance into life; he glories in it as his only power day by day to overcome the flesh and the world. "I am crucified with Christ." "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ, by which I am crucified to the world." Even as nothing less than the death of Christ was needed to inaugurate the New Covenant, and the resurrection life that animates it, there is no entrance into the true New Covenant life other than by a partaking of that death.

"Fallen from grace." This is a third word that describes the condition of these Galatians in that bondage in which they were really impotent to all true good. Paul is not speaking of a final falling away here, for he still addresses them as Christians, but of their having wandered from that walk in the way of enabling and sanctifying grace, in which a Christian can get the victory over sin. As long as grace is principally connected with pardon and the entrance to the Christian life, the flesh is the only power in which to serve and work. But when we know what exceeding abundance of grace has been provided, and how God "makes all grace abound, that we may abound to all good works," we know that, as it is by faith, so too it is by grace alone that we stand a single moment or take a single step.

The contrast to this life of impotence and failure is found in the one word, "the Spirit." "If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law," with its demand on your own strength. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not"--a definite, certain promise--"ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." The Spirit gives liberty from the law, from the flesh, from sin. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, peace, joy." Of the New Covenant promise, "I will put My Spirit within you, and I will cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments," the Spirit is the centre and the sum. He is the power of the supernatural life of true obedience and holiness.

And what would have been the course that the Galatians would have taken if they had accepted this teaching of St. Paul? As they hear his question, "Now that ye have come to know God, how turn ye back again into the weak and beggarly rudiments, whereunto ye desire to be in bondage again?" they would have felt that there was but one course. Nothing else could help them but at once to turn back again to the path they had left. At the point where they had left it, they could enter again. With any one of them who wished to do so, this turning away from the Old Covenant legal spirit, and the renewed surrender to the Mediator of the New Covenant, could be the act of a moment--one single step. As the light of the New Covenant promise dawned upon him, and he saw how Christ was to be all, and faith all, and the Holy Spirit in the heart all, and the faithfulness of a Covenant-keeping God all in all, he would feel that he had but one thing to do--in utter impotence to yield himself to God, and in simple faith to count upon Him to perform what He had spoken. In Christian experience there may be still the Old Covenant life of bondage and failure. In Christian experience there may be a life that gives way entirely to the New Covenant grace and spirit. In Christian experience, when the true vision has been received of what the New Covenant means, a faith that rests fully on the Mediator of the New Covenant can enter at once into the life which the Covenant secures.

I cannot too earnestly beg all believers who long to know to the utmost what the grace of God can work in them, to study carefully the question as to whether the acknowledgment that our being in the bondage of the Old Covenant is the reason of our failure, and whether a clear insight into the possibility of an entire change in our relation to God, is not what is needed to give us the help we seek. We may be seeking for our growth in a more diligent use of the means of grace, and a more earnest striving to live in accordance with God's will, and yet entirely fail. The reason is, that there is a secret root of evil which must be removed. That root is the spirit of bondage, the legal spirit of self-effort, which hinders that humble faith that knows that God will work all, and yields to Him to do it. That spirit may be found amidst very great zeal for God's service, and very earnest prayer for His grace; it does not enjoy the rest of faith, and cannot overcome sin, because it does not stand in the liberty with which Christ has made us free, and does not know that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. There the soul can say: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus bath made me free from the law of sin and death." When once we admit heartily, not only that there are failings in our life, but that there is something radically wrong that can be changed, we shall turn with a new interest, with a deeper confession of ignorance and impotence, with a hope that looks to God alone for teaching and strength, to find that in the New Covenant there is an actual provision for every need.

CHAPTER VI

The Everlasting Covenant of the Spirit

"They shall be My people, and l will be their God. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me."--JER. xxxii. 38, 40.

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them. Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them: it shall be an everlasting covenant with them."--EZEK. xxxvi. 26, 27, xxxvii. 26.

WE have had the words of the institution of the New Covenant. Let us listen to the further teaching we have concerning it in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, where God speaks of it as an everlasting Covenant. In every covenant there are two parties. And 48 the very foundation of a covenant rests on the thought that each party is to be faithful to the part it has undertaken to perform. Unfaithfulness on either side breaks the covenant.

It was thus with the Old Covenant. God had said to Israel, Obey My voice, and I will be your God (Jer. vii. 23, xi. 4). These simple words contained the whole Covenant. And when Israel disobeyed, the Covenant was broken. The question of Israel being able or not able to obey was not taken into consideration: disobedience forfeited the privileges of the Covenant.

If a New Covenant were to be made, and if that was to be better than the Old, this was the one thing to be provided for. No New Covenant could be of any profit unless provision were made for securing obedience. Obedience there must be. God as Creator could never take His creatures into His favour and fellowship, except they obeyed Him. The thing would have been an impossibility. If the New Covenant is to be better than the Old, if it is to be an everlasting Covenant, never to be broken, it must make some sufficient provision for securing the obedience of the Covenant people. And this is indeed the glory of the New Covenant, the glory that excelleth, that this provision has been made. In a way that no human thought could have devised, by a stipulation that never entered into any human covenant, by an undertaking in which God's infinite condescension and power and faithfulness are to be most wonderfully exhibited, by a supernatural mystery of Divine wisdom and grace, the New Covenant provides a guarantee, not only for God's faithfulness, but for man's too! And this in no other way than by God Himself undertaking to secure man's part as well as His own. Do try and get hold of this.

It is just because this, the essential part of the New Covenant, so exceeds and confounds all human thoughts of what a covenant means, that Christians, from the Galatians downwards, have not been able to see and believe what the New Covenant really brings. They have thought that human unfaithfulness was a factor permanently to be reckoned with as something utterly unconquerable and incurable, and that the possibility of a life of obedience, with the witness from within of a good conscience, and from above of God's pleasure, was not to be expected. They have therefore sought to stir the mind to its utmost by arguments and motives, and never realised how the Holy Spirit is to be the unceasing, universal, all-sufficient worker of everything that has to be wrought by the Christian.

Let us beseech God earnestly that He would reveal to us by the Holy Spirit the things that He hath prepared for them that love Him; things that have not entered into the heart of man; the wonderful life of the New Covenant. All depends upon our knowledge of what God will work in us. Listen to what God says in Jeremiah of the two parts of His everlasting Covenant, shortly after He had announced the New Covenant, and in further elucidation of it. The central thought of that, that the heart is to be put right, is here reiterated and confirmed. "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good." That is, God will be unchangeably faithful. He will not turn from us. "But I will put My fear into their heart, that they shall not depart from Me." This is the second half: Israel will be unchangeably faithful too. And that because God will so put His fear in their heart, that they shall not depart from Him. As little as God will turn from them, will they depart from Him! As faithfully as He undertakes for the fulfilment of His part, will He undertake for the fulfilment of their part, that they shall not depart from Him!

Listen to God's word in Ezekiel, in regard to one of the terms of His Covenant of peace, His everlasting Covenant. (Ezek. xxxiv. 25, xxxvi. 27, xxxvii. 26): " I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and

do them." In the Old Covenant we have nothing of this sort. You have, on the contrary, from the story of the golden calf and the breaking of the Tables of the Covenant onward, the sad fact of continual departure from God. We find God longing for what He would so fain have seen, but was not to be found. "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always" (Deut. v. 29). We find throughout the Book of Deuteronomy, a thing without parallel in the history of any religion or religious lawgiver, that Moses most distinctly prophesies their forsaking of God, with the terrible curses and dispersion that would come upon them. It is only at the close of his threatenings (Deut. xxx. 6) that he gives the promise of the new time that would come: "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and thou shalt obey the voice of the Lord thy God." The whole Old Covenant was dependent on man's faithfulness: "The Lord thy God keepeth covenant with them that keep His commandments." God's keeping the Covenant availed little, if man did not keep it. Nothing could help man until the "If ye shall diligently keep" of the law, was replaced by the word of promise, " I will put My Spirit in you, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them." The one supreme difference of the New Covenant; the one thing for which the Mediator, and the Blood, and the Spirit were given; the one fruit God sought and Himself engaged to bring forth was this: a heart filled with His fear and love, a heart to cleave unto Him and not depart from Him, a heart in which His Spirit and His law dwells, a heart that delights to do His will.

Here is the inmost secret of the New Covenant. It deals with the heart of man in a way of Divine power. It not only appeals to the heart by every motive of fear or love, of duty or gratitude. That the law also did. But it reveals God Himself, cleansing our heart and making it new, changing it entirely from a stony heart into a heart of flesh, a tender, living, loving heart, putting His Spirit within it, and so, by His Almighty Power and Love, breathing and working in it, making the promise true, "I will cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments." A heart in perfect harmony with Himself, a life and walk in His way--God has engaged in Covenant to work this in us. He undertakes for our part in the Covenant as much as for His own.

This is nothing but the restoration of the original relation between God and the man He had made in His likeness. He was on earth to be the very image of God, because God was to live and to work all in him, and he to find his glory and blessedness in thus owing all to God. This is the exceeding glory of the New Covenant, of the Pentecostal dispensation, that by the Holy Spirit God could now again be the indwelling life of His people, and so make the promise a reality: "I will cause you to walk in My statutes."

With God's presence secured to us every moment of the day--"I will not turn away from them"; with God's "fear put into our heart" by His own Spirit, and our heart thus responding to His holy presence; with our hearts thus made right with God, we can, we shall walk in His statutes, and keep His judgments.

My brethren, the great sin of Israel under the Old Covenant, that by which they greatly grieved Him, was this: "they limited the Holy One of Israel." Under the New Covenant there is no less danger of this sin. It makes it impossible for God to fulfil His promises. Let us seek, above everything, for the Holy Spirit's teaching, to show us exactly what God has established the New Covenant for, that we may honour Him by believing all that His love has prepared for us.

And if we ask for the cause of the unbelief, that prevents the fulfilment of the promise, we shall find that it is not far to seek. It is, in most cases, the lack of desire for the promised blessing. In all who came to Jesus on earth the intensity of their desire for the healing they needed made them ready and glad to believe in His word. Where the law has done its full work, where the actual desire to be freed from every sin is strong, and masters the heart, the promise of the New Covenant, when once really understood, comes like bread to a famishing man. The subtle unbelief, that thinks it impossible to be kept from sinning, cuts away the power of accepting the provision of the everlasting Covenant. God's Word, "I will put My fear in their heart, that they shall not depart from Me"; "I will put My Spirit within you, and ye shall keep My judgment," is understood in some feeble sense, according to our experience, and not according to what the Word and what God means. And the soul settles down into a despair, or a self-contentment, that says it can never be otherwise, and makes true conviction for sin impossible.

Let me say to every reader who would fain be able to believe fully all that God says: Cherish every whisper of the conscience and of the Spirit that convinces of sin. Whatever it be, a hasty temper, a sharp word, an unloving or impatient thought, anything of selfishness or self-will-- cherish that which condemns it in you, as part of the schooling that is to bring you to Christ and the full possession of His salvation. The New Covenant is meant to meet the need for a power of not sinning, which the Old could not give. Come with that need; it will prepare and open the heart for all the everlasting Covenant secures you. It will bring you to that humble and entire dependence upon God in His Omnipotence and His Faithfulness, in which He can and will work all He has promised.

CHAPTER VII

The New Covenant: A Ministration of the Spirit

"Ye are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not on tables of stone, but on tables that are hearts of flesh . . . Our sufficiency is of God; who also made us sufficient as ministers of the New Covenant; not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. For if the ministration of death came with glory, how shall not rather the ministration of the Spirit be with glory? For if the ministration of condemnation is glory, much rather doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory."--2 COR. iii. 3, 6-10.

IN this wonderful chapter Paul reminds the Corinthians, in speaking of his ministry among them, of what its chief characteristics were. As a ministry of the New Covenant he contrasts it, and the whole dispensation of which it is part, with that of the Old. The Old was graven in stone, the New in the heart. The Old could be written in ink, and was in the letter that killeth; the New, of the Spirit that maketh alive. The Old was a ministration of condemnation and death; the New, of righteousness and life. The Old indeed bad its glory, for it was of Divine appointment, and brought its Divine blessing; but it was a glory that passed away, and had no glory by reason of the glory that excelleth, the exceeding glory of that which remaineth. With the Old there was the veil on the heart; in the New, the veil is taken away from the face and the heart, the Spirit of the Lord gives liberty, and, reflecting with unveiled face the glory of the Lord, we are changed from glory to glory, into the same image, as by the Spirit of the Lord. The glory that excelleth proved its power in this, that it not only marked the dispensation on its Divine side, but so exerted its power in the heart and life of its subjects, that it was seen in them too, as they were changed by the Spirit into Christ's image, from glory to glory.

Think a moment of the contrast. The Old Covenant was of the letter that killeth. The law came with its literal instruction, and sought by the knowledge it gave of God's will to appeal to man's fear and his love, to his natural powers of mind and conscience and will. It spoke to him as if he could obey, that it might convince him of what he did not know, that he could not obey. And so it fulfilled its mission: "The commandment which was unto life, this I found to be unto death." In the New, on the contrary, how different was everything. Instead of the letter, the Spirit that giveth life, that breathes the very life of God, the life of heaven into us. Instead of a law graven in stone, the law written in the heart, worked into the heart's affection and powers, making it one with them. Instead of the vain attempt to work from without inward, the Spirit and the law are put into the inward parts, thence to work outward in life and walk.

This passage brings into view that which is the distinctive blessing of the New Covenant. In working out our salvation God bestowed upon us two wonderful gifts. We read: "God sent forth His Son, that He might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Here we have the two parts of God's work in salvation. The one, the more objective, what He did that we might become His children--He sent forth His Son. The second, the more subjective, what He did that we might live like His children: He sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts. In the former we have the external manifestation of the work of redemption; in the other, its inward appropriation; the former for the sake of the latter. These two halves form one great whole, and may not be separated.

In the promises of the New Covenant, as we find them in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, as well as in our text and many other passages of Scripture, it is manifest that God's great object in salvation is to get possession of the heart. The heart is the real life; with the heart a man loves, and wills, and acts; the heart makes the man. God made man's heart for His own dwelling, that in it He might reveal His love and His glory. God sent Christ to accomplish a redemption by which man's heart could be won back to Him; nothing but that could satisfy God. And that is what is accomplished when the Holy Spirit makes the heart of God's child what it should be. The whole work of Christ's redemption--His Atonement and Victory, His Exaltation and Intercession, His glory at the right hand of God--all these are only preparatory to what is the chief triumph of His grace: the renewal of the heart to be the temple of God. Through Christ God gives the Holy Spirit to glorify Him in the heart, by working there all that He has done and is doing for the soul.

In a great deal of our religious teaching a fear, lest we should derogate from the honour of Christ, has been alleged as the reason for giving His work for us, on the Cross or in heaven, a greater prominence than His work in our heart by the Holy Spirit. The result has been that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and His mighty work as the life of the heart, as very little known in true power. If we

look carefully at what the New Covenant promises mean, we shall see how the "sending forth of the Spirit of His Son into our hearts" is indeed the consummation and crown of Christ's redeeming work. Let us just think of what these promises imply.

In the Old Covenant man had failed in what he had to do. In the New, God is to do everything in him. The Old could only convict of sin. The New is to put it away and cleanse the heart from its filthiness. In the Old it was the heart that was wrong; for the New a new heart is provided, into which God puts His fear and His law and His love. The Old demanded, but failed to secure obedience; in the New, God causes us to walk in His judgments. The New is to fit man for a true holiness, a true fulfilment of the law of loving God with the whole heart, and our neighbours as ourselves, a walk truly well-pleasing to God. The New changes a man from glory to glory after the image of Christ. All because the Spirit of God's Son is given into the heart. The Old gave no power: in the New all is by the Spirit, the mighty power of God. As complete as the reign and power of Christ on the throne of heaven, is His dominion on the throne of the heart by His Holy Spirit given to us. [3]

It is as we bring all these traits of the New Covenant life together into one focus, and look at the heart of God's child as the object of this mighty redemption, that we shall begin to understand what is secured to us, and what it is that we are to expect from our Covenant God. We shall see wherein the glory of the ministration of the Spirit consists, even in this, that God can fill our heart with His love, and make it His abode.

We are accustomed to say, and truly so, that the worth of the Son of God, who came to die for us, is the measure of the worth of the soul in God's sight, and of the greatness of the work that had to be done to save it. Let us even so see, that the Divine glory of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Father and the Son, is the measure of God's longing to have our heart wholly for Himself, of the glory of the work that is to be wrought within us, of the power by which that work will be accomplished.

We shall see how the glory of the ministration of the Spirit is no other than the glory of the Lord, as it is not only in heaven, but resting upon us and dwelling in us, and changing us into the same image from glory to glory. The inconceivable glory of our exalted Lord in heaven has its counterpart here on earth in the exceeding glory of the Holy Spirit who glorifies Him in us, who lays His glory on us, as He changes us into His likeness.

The New Covenant has no power to save and to bless except as it is a ministration of the Spirit. That Spirit works in lesser or greater degree, as He is neglected and grieved, or yielded to and trusted. Let us honour Him, and give Him His place as the Spirit of the New Covenant, by expecting and accepting all He waits to do for us.

He is the great gift of the Covenant. His coming from heaven was the proof that the Mediator of the Covenant was on the throne in glory, and could now make us partakers of the heavenly life.

He is the only teacher of what the Covenant means: dwelling in our heart, He wakens there the thought and the desire for what God has prepared for us.

He is the Spirit of faith, who enables us to believe the otherwise incomprehensible blessing and power in which the New Covenant works, and to claim it as our own.

He is the Spirit of grace and of power, by whom the obedience of the Covenant and the fellowship with God can be maintained without interruption.

He Himself is the Possessor and the Bearer and the Communicator of all the Covenant promises, the Revealer and the Glorifier of Jesus, its Mediator and Surety.

To believe fully in the Holy Spirit, as the present and abiding and all-comprehending gift of the New Covenant, has been to many a one an entrance into its fulness of blessing.

Begin at once, child of God, to give the Holy Spirit the place in thy religion He has in God's plan. Be still before God, and believe that He is within thee, and ask the Father to work in thee through Him. Regard thyself, thy spirit as well as thy body, with holy reverence as His temple. Let the consciousness of His holy presence and working fill thee with holy calm and fear. And be sure that all that God calls thee to be, Christ through His Spirit will work in thee.

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[3] See Note C, on George Muller.

NOTE C. -- CHAP. VII

George Muller and his Second Conversion

IN the life of George Muller of Bristol there was an epoch, four years after his conversion, to which he ever after looked back, and of which he often spoke, as his entrance into the true Christian life.

In an address given to ministers and workers after his ninetieth birthday, he spoke thus of it himself: "That leads to another thought--the full surrender of the heart to God. I was converted in November 1825, but I only came, into the full surrender of the heart four years later, in July 1829. The love of money was gone, the love of place was gone, the love of position was gone, the love of worldly pleasures and engagements was gone. God, God, God alone became my portion. I found my all in Him; I wanted nothing else. And by the grace of God this has remained, and has made me a happy man, an exceedingly happy man, and it led me to care only about the things of God. I ask, affectionately, my beloved brethren, have you fully surrendered the heart to God, or is there this thing or that thing with which you are taken up irrespective of God? I read a little of the Scriptures before, but preferred other books, but since that time the revelation He has made of Himself has become unspeakably blessed to me, and I can say from my heart, God is an infinitely lovely Being. Oh! be not satisfied until in your inmost soul you can say, God is an infinitely lovely Being!"

The account he gives of this change in his journal is as follows. He speaks of one whom he had heard preach at Teignmouth, where he had gone for the sake of his health. "Though I did not like all he said, yet I saw a gravity and solemnity in him different from the rest. Through the instrumentality of this brother the Lord bestowed a great blessing upon me, for which I shall have cause to thank Him throughout eternity. God then began to show me that the Word of God alone is to be our standard of judgment in spiritual things; that it can only be explained by the Holy Spirit, and that in our day, as well as in former times, He is the Teacher of His people. The office of the Holy Spirit I had not experimentally understood before that time. I had not before seen that the Holy Spirit alone can teach us about our state by nature, show us our need of a Saviour, enable us to believe in Christ, explain to us the Scriptures, help us in preaching, etc.

"It was my beginning to understand this point in particular which had a great effect on me; for the Lord enabled me to put it to the test of experience by laying aside commentaries and almost every other book, and simply reading the Word of God and studying it. The result of this was that the first evening that I shut myself into my room to give myself to prayer and meditation over the Scriptures, I learned more in a few hours than I had done during a period of several months previously. But the particular difference was that I received real strength in my soul in doing so.

"In addition to this, it pleased the Lord to lead me to see a higher standard of devotedness than I had seen before. He led me, in a measure, to see what is my glory in this world, even to be despised, to be poor and mean with Christ . . . I returned to London much better in body. And as to my soul, the change was so great that it was like a second conversion."

In another passage he speaks thus: "I fell into the snare into which so many young believers fall, the reading of religious books is preferred to the Scriptures. Now the scriptural way of reasoning would have been: God Himself has condescended to become an author, and I am ignorant of that precious Book which His Holy Spirit has caused to be written; therefore I ought to read again this Book of books most earnestly, most prayerfully, and with much meditation. Instead of acting thus, and being led by my ignorance of the Word to study it more, my difficulty of understanding it made me careless of reading it, and then, like many believers, I practically preferred for the first four years of my Christian life, the works of uninspired men to the oracles of the Living God. The consequence was that I remained a babe, both in knowledge and grace. In knowledge, I say, for all true knowledge must be derived by the Spirit from the Word. This lack of knowledge most sadly kept me back from walking steadily in the ways of God. For it is the truth makes us free, by delivering us from the slavery of the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life. The Word proves it, the experience of the saints proves it, and also my own experience most decidedly proves it. For when it pleased the Lord, in August 1829, to bring me really to the Scriptures, my life and walk became very different.

"If anyone would ask me how he may read the Scriptures most profitably, I would answer him:--

"1. Above all he must seek to have it settled in his own mind that God alone, by the Holy spirit, can teach him, and that, therefore, as God will be inquired for all blessings, it becomes him to seek for God's blessing previous to reading, and also while reading.

"2. He should also have it settled in his mind that though the Holy spirit is the best and sufficient Teacher, yet that He does not

always teach immediately when we desire it, and that, therefore, we may have to entreat Him again and again for the explanation of certain passages; but that He will surely teach us at last, if we will seek for light prayerfully, patiently, and for the glory of God."

Just one more passage, from an address given on his ninetieth birthday: "For sixty-nine years and ten months he had been a very happy man. That he attributed to two things. He had maintained a good conscience, not wilfully going on in a course he knew to be contrary to the mind of God; he did not, of course, mean that he was perfect; he was poor, weak, and sinful. Secondly, he attributed it to his love of Holy Scripture. Of late years his practice had been four times every year to read through the Scriptures, with application to his own heart, and with meditation; and that day he was a greater lover of God's Word than he was sixty-six years ago. It was this, and maintaining a good conscience, that had given him all these years peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

In connection with what has been said about the New Covenant being a ministration of the Spirit this narrative is most instructing. It shows us how George Muller's power lay in God's revealing to him the work of the Holy Spirit. He writes that up to the time of that change he had "not experimentally understood the office of the Holy Spirit." We speak much of George Muller's power in prayer; it is of importance to remember that that power was entirely owing to his love of, and faith in, God's Word. But it is of still more importance to notice that his power to believe God's Word so fully was entirely owing to his having learned to know the Holy Spirit as his Teacher. When the words of God are explained to us, and made living within us by the Holy Spirit, they have a power to awaken faith which they otherwise have not. The Word then brings us into contact with God, comes to us as from God direct, and binds our whole life to Him.

When the Holy Spirit thus feeds us on the Word, our whole life comes under His power, and the fruit is seen, not only in the power of prayer, but as much in the power of obedience. Notice how Mr. Muller tells us this, that the two secrets of his great happiness were, his great love for God's Word, and his ever maintaining a good conscience, not knowingly doing anything against the will of God. In giving himself to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, as he tells us in his birthday address, he made a full surrender of the entire heart to God, to be ruled by the Word. He gave himself to obey that Word in everything, he believed that the Holy Spirit gave the grace to obey, and so he was able to maintain a walk free from knowingly transgressing God's law. This is a point he always insisted on. So he writes, in regard to a life of dependence upon God: "It will not do--it is not possible--to live in sin, and at the same time, by communion with God, to draw down from heaven everything one needs for the life that now is." Again, speaking of the strengthening of faith: "It is of the utmost importance that we seek to maintain an upright heart and a good conscience, and therefore do not knowingly and habitually indulge in those things which are contrary to the mind of God. All my confidence in God, all my leaning upon Him in the hour of trial, will be gone if I have a guilty conscience, and do not seek to put away this guilty conscience, but still continue to do things which are contrary to His mind."

A careful perusal of this testimony will show us how the chief points usually insisted upon in connection with the second blessing are all found here. There is the full surrender of the heart to be taught and led alone by the Spirit of God. There is the higher standard of holiness which is at once set up. There is the tender desire in nothing to offend God, but to have at all times a good conscience, that testifies that we are pleasing to God. And there is the faith that where the Holy Spirit reveals to us in the Word the will of God, He gives the sufficient strength for the doing of it. "The particular difference," he says of reading with faith of the Holy Spirit's teaching, "was that I received real strength in my soul in doing so." No wonder that he said: The change was so great, that it was like a second conversion.

All centres in this, that we believe in the New Covenant and its promises as a ministration of the Spirit. That belief may come to some suddenly, as to George Muller ; or it may dawn upon others by degrees. Let all say to God that they are ready to put their whole heart and life under the rule of the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, teaching them by the Word, and strengthening them by His grace. He enables us to live pleasing to God.

CHAPTER VIII

The Two Covenants: the Transition

"Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of the everlasting covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ."--HEB. xiii. 20, 21.

THE transition from the Old Covenant to the New was not slow or gradual, but by a tremendous crisis. Nothing less than the death of Christ was the close of the Old. Nothing less than His resurrection from the dead, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant, the opening of the New. The path of preparation that led up to the crisis was long and slow; the rending of the veil, that symbolised the end of the old worship, was the work of a moment. By a death, once for all, Christ's work, as fulfiller of law and prophets, as the end of the law, was for ever finished. By a resurrection in the power of an endless life, the Covenant of Life was ushered in.

These events have an infinite significance, as revealing the character of the Covenants they are related to. The death of Christ shows the true nature of the Old Covenant. It is elsewhere called "a ministration of death" (2 Cor. iii. 7). It brought forth nothing but death. It ended in death; only by death could the life that had been lived under it be brought to an end. The New was to be a Covenant of Life; it had its birth in the omnipotent resurrection power that brought Christ from the dead; its one mark and blessing is, that all it gives comes, not only as a promise, but as an experience, in the power of an endless life. The Death reveals the utter inefficacy and insufficiency of the Old; the Life brings nigh and imparts to us for ever all that the New has to offer. An insight into the completeness of the transition, as seen in Christ, prepares us for apprehending the reality of the change in our life, when, "like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also walk in newness of life." The complete difference between the life in the Old and the New is remarkably illustrated by a previous passage in the Epistle (Heb. ix. 16). After having said that a death for the redemption of transgressions had to take place ere the New Covenant could be established, the writer adds, "Where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it." [4] Before any heir can obtain the legacy, its first owner, the testator, must have died. The old proprietorship, the old life, must disappear entirely before the new heir, the new life, can enter upon the inheritance. Nothing but death can work the transference of the property. It is even so with Christ, with the Old and the New Covenant life, with our own deliverance from the Old and our entrance on the New. Now, having been made dead to the law by the body of Christ, we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were holden--here is the completeness of the deliverance from Christ's side; "so that we serve "--here is the completeness of the change in our experience-- "in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter."

The transition, if it is to be real and whole, must take place by a death. As with Christ the Mediator of the Covenant, so with His people, the heirs of the Covenant. In Him we are dead to sin; in Him we are dead to the law. Just as Adam died to God, and we inherit a nature actually and really dead in sin, dead to God and His kingdom, so in Christ we died to sin, and inherit a nature actually dead to sin and its dominion. It is when the Holy Spirit reveals and makes real to us this death to sin and to the law too, as the one condition of a life to God, that the transition from the Old to the New Covenant can be fully realised in us. The Old was, and was meant to be, a "ministration of death "; until it has completely done its work in us there is no complete discharge from its power. The man who sees that self is incurably evil and must die; who gives self utterly to death as he sinks before God in utter impotence and the surrender to His working; who consents to death with Christ on the cross as his desert, and in faith accepts it as his only deliverance; he alone is prepared to be led by the Holy Spirit into the full enjoyment of the New Covenant life. He will learn to understand how completely death makes an end to all self-effort, and how, as he lives in Christ to God, everything henceforth is to be the work of God Himself.

See how beautifully our text brings out this truth, that just as much as Christ's resurrection out of death was the work of God Himself, is our life equally to be wholly God's own work too. Not more direct and wonderful than was in Christ the transition from death to life, is to be in us the experience of what the New Covenant life is to bring. Notice the subject of the two verses. In ver. 20 we have what God has done in raising Christ from the dead; in ver. 21, what God is to do in us, working in us what is pleasing to Him. (20) "The God of peace, who brought from the dead that great Shepherd of the sheep, even our Lord Jesus, (21) Make you perfect in every good thing to do His will, working in you that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ." We have the

name of our Lord Jesus twice. In the first case it refers to what God has done to Christ for us, raising Him; in the second, to what God is doing through Christ in us, working His pleasure in us. Because it is the same God continuing in us the work He began in Christ, it is in us just what it was in Christ. In Christ's death we see Him in utter impotence allowing and counting upon God to work all and give Him life. God wrought the wonderful transition. In us we see the same; it is only as we give ourself unto that death too, as we entirely cease from self and its works, as we lie, as in the grave, waiting for God to work all, that the God of resurrection life can work in us all His good pleasure.

It was "through the blood of the everlasting Covenant," with its atonement for sin, and its destruction of sin's power, that God effected that resurrection. It is through that same blood that we are redeemed and freed from the power of sin, and made partakers of Christ's resurrection life. The more we study the New Covenant, the more we shall see that its one aim is to restore man, out of the Fall, to the life in God for which he was created. It does this first, by delivering him from the power of sin in Christ's death, and then by taking possession of his heart, his life, for God to work all in him by the Holy Spirit. The whole argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews as to the Old and New Covenants is here summed up in these concluding verses. Just as He raised Christ from the dead, the God of the everlasting Covenant can and will now make you perfect in every good thing to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ. Your doing His will is the object of creation and redemption. God's working it all in you is what redemption has made possible. The Old Covenant of law and effort and failure has ended in condemnation and death. The New Covenant is coming to give, in all whom the law has slain and brought to bow in their utter impotence, the law written in the heart, the Spirit dwelling there, and God working all, both to will and to do, through Jesus Christ.

Oh for a Divine revelation that the transition from Christ's death, in its impotence, to His life in God's power, is the image, the pledge, the power of our transition out of the Old Covenant, when it has slain us, to the New, with God working in us all in all!

The transition from Old to New, as efected in Christ, was sudden. Is it so in the believer? Not always. In us it depends upon a revelation. There have been cases in which a believer, sighing and struggling against the yoke of bondage, has in one moment had it given to him to see what a complete salvation the New Covenant brings to the heart and the inner life, through the ministration of the Spirit, and by faith he has entered at once into his rest. There have been other cases in which, gradual as the dawn of day, the light of God has risen upon the heart. God's offer of entrance into the enjoyment of our New Covenant privileges is always urgent and immediate. Every believer is a child of the New Covenant, and heir of all its promises. The death of the Testator gives him full right to immediate possession. God longs to bring us into the land of promise; let us not come short through unbelief.

There may be someone who can hardly believe that such a mighty change in his life is within his reach, and yet who would fain know what he is to do if there is to be any hope of his attaining it. I have just said, the death of the testator gives the heir immediate right to the inheritance. And yet the heir, if he be a minor, does not enter on the possession. A term of years ends the stage of minority on earth, and he is no longer under guardians. In the spiritual life the state of pupilage ends, not with the expiry of years, but the moment the minor proves his fitness for being made free from the law, by accepting the liberty there is in Christ Jesus. The transition, as with the Old Testament, as with Christ, as with the disciples, comes when the time is fulfilled and all things are now ready.

But what is one to do who is longing to be thus made ready? Accept your death to sin in Christ, and act it out. Acknowledge the sentence of death on everything that is of nature: take and keep the place before God of utter unworthiness and helplessness; sink down before Him in humility, meekness, patience, and resignation to His will and mercy. [5] Fix your heart upon the great and mighty God, who in His grace will work in you above what you can ask or think, and will make you a monument of His mercy. Believe that every blessing of the Covenant of grace is yours; by the death of the Testator you are entitled to it all--and on that faith act, knowing that all is yours. The new heart is yours, the law written in the heart is yours, the Holy Spirit, the seal of the Covenant, is yours. Act on thie faith, and count upon God as Faithful and Able, and oh! so Loving, to reveal in you, to make true in you, all the power and glory of His everlasting Covenant.

May God reveal to us the difference between the two lives under the Old and the New; the resurrection power of the New, with God working all in us; the power of the transition secured to us in death with Christ and life in Him. And may He teach us at once to trust Christ Jesus for a full participation in all the New Covenant secures.

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[4] The Greek word for covenant and testament is the same. This is the only passage where the allusion to a testator, makes the meaning testament a necessity. Everywhere else the Revised Version has rightly used covenant.

[5] If you would understand the full meaning of this clause and know how to practise its teaching, consult a little book just published, Dying to Self: A Golden Dialogue, by William Law, with Notes by Rev. Andrew Murray. (Nisbet & Co.) See also Note D.

NOTE E. -- CHAP. VIII

Nothing of Myself

ONE would think that no words could make it plainer than the words of the Covenant state it--that the one difference between Old and New is, that in the latter everything is to be done by God Himself. And yet believers and even teachers do not take it in. And even those who do, find it hard to live it out. Our whole being is so blinded to the true relation to God, His inconceivable Omnipresent Omnipotence working every moment in us is so far beyond the reach of human conception, our little hearts cannot rise to the reality of His Infinite Love making itself one with us, and delighting to dwell in us, and to work all in us that has to be done there--that, when we think we have accepted the truth, we find it is only a thought. We are such strangers to the knowledge of what a GOD really is, as the actual life by which His creatures live. In Him we live and move and have our being. And specially is the knowledge of the Triune God too high for us, in that wonderful, most real, and most practical indwelling, to make which possible the Son became Incarnate, and the Holy Spirit was sent forth into our hearts. Only they who confess their ignorance, and wait very humbly and persistently on our Blessed God to teach us by His Holy Spirit what that all-working indwelling is, can hope to have it revealed to them.

It is not long since I had occasion, in preparing a series of Bible Lessons for our Students Association here, to make a study of the Gospel of St. John, and of the life of our Lord as set forth there. I cannot say how deeply I have been afresh impressed with that which I cannot but regard as the deepest secret of His life on earth, His dependence on the Father. It has come to me like a new revelation. Some twelve times and more He uses the word not and nothing of Himself. Not My will. Not My words. Not My honour. Not Mine own glory. I can do nothing of Myself. I speak not of Myself. I came not of Myself. I do nothing of Myself.

Just think a moment what this means in connection with what He tells us of His life in the Father. "As the Father hath life in Himself, so He hath given to the Son to have life in Himself" (v. 26). "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (v. 23). And yet this Son, who hath life in Himself even as the Father has, immediately adds (v. 30): "I can of mine own self do nothing." We should have thought that with this life in Himself He would have the power of independent action as the Father has. But no. "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do." The chief mark of this Divine life He has in Himself is evidently unceasing dependence, receiving from the Father, by the moment, what He bad to speak or do. Nothing of Myself is manifestly as true of Him as it ever could be of the weakest or most sinful man. The life of the Father dwelling in Christ, and Christ in the Father, meant that just as truly as when He was begotten of the Father, He received Divine life and glory from Him, so the continuation of that life came only by an eternal process of giving and receiving, as absolute as is the eternal generation itself. The more closely we study this trutb, and Christ's life in the light of it, the more we are compelled to say, the deepest root of Christ's relationship to the Father, the true reason why He was so well-pleasing, the secret of His glorifying the Father, was this: He allowed God to do all in Him. He only received and wrought out what God wrought in Him. His whole attitude was that of the open ear, the servant spirit, the childlike dependence that waited for all on God.

The infinite importance of this truth in the Christian life is easily felt. The life Christ lived in the Father is the life He imparts to us. We are to abide in Him and He in us, even as He in the Father and the Father in Him. And if the secret of His abiding in the Father be this unceasing self-abnegation--"I can do nothing of Myself"--this life of most entire and absolute dependence and waiting upon God, must it not far more be the most marked feature of our Christian life, the first and all-pervading disposition we seek to maintain? In a little book of William Law's, that has just been issued, [10] he specially insists upon this in his so striking repetition of the call, if we would die to self in order to have the birth of Divine love in our souls, to sink down in humility, meekness, patience, and resignation to God. I think that no one who at all enters into this advice, but will feel what new point is given to it by the remembrance of how this entire self-renunciation was not only one of the many virtues in the character of Christ, but, indeed, that first essential one without which God could have wrought nothing in Him, through which God did work all.

Let us make Christ's words our own: "I can do nothing of Myself." Take it as the keynote of a single day. Look up and see the Infinite God waiting to do everything as soon as we are ready to give up all to Him, and receive all from Him. Bow down in lowly worship, and wait for the Holy Spirit to work some measure of the mind of Christ in you. Do not be disconcerted if you do not learn the lesson at once: there is the God of love waiting to do everything in him who is willing to be nothing. At moments the teaching appears dangerous, at other times terribly difficult. The Blessed Son of God teaches it us--this was His whole life: I can do nothing of Myself. He is our life; He will work it in us. And when as the Lamb of God He begets this His disposition in us, we shall be prepared for Him to rise on us and shine in us in His heavenly glory.

"Nothing of Myself"--that word spoken eighteen hundred years ago, coming out of the inmost depths of the heart of the Son of God--is a seed in which the power of the eternal life is hidden. Take it straight from the heart of Christ, and hide it in your heart. Meditate on it till it reveals the beauty of His Divine meekness and humility, and explains how all the power and glory of God could work in Him. Believe in it as containing the very life and disposition which you need, and believe in Christ, whose Spirit dwells in the seed to make it true in you. Begin, in single acts of self-emptying, to offer it to God as the one desire of your heart. Count upon God accepting them, and meeting them with His grace, to make the acts into habits, and the habits into dispositions. And you may depend upon it, there is nothing that will lift you so near to God, nothing that will unite you closer to Christ, nothing that will prepare you for the abiding presence and power of God working in you, as the death to self which is found in the simple word--NOTHING OF MYSELF.

This word is one of the keys to the New Covenant Life. As I believe that God is actually to work all in me, I shall see that the one thing that is hindering me is, my doing something of myself. As I am willing to learn from Christ by the Holy Spirit to say truly, Nothing of myself, I shall have the true preparation to receive all God has engaged to work, and the power confidently to expect it. I shall learn that the whole secret of the New Covenant is just one thing: GOD WORKS ALL! The seal of the Covenant stands sure: "I the Lord have spoken it, AND I WILL DO IT."

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[10] Dying to Self: A Golden Dialogue. by William Law. With Notes. The thought is worked out with exceeding power, and the lesson taught that the only thing man can do for his salvation is to deny and cease from himself, that God may work in him.

CHAPTER IX

The Blood of the Covenant

"Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you."-
EX. xxiv. 8; HEB. ix. 20.
"This cup is the new covenant in My blood."-1 COR. xi. 25; MATT. xxvi.
28.
"The blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified."- HEB. x. 29.
"The blood of the everlasting covenant."-HEB. xiii.21.

THE blood is one of the strangest, the deepest, the mightiest, and the most heavenly of the thoughts of God. It lies at the very root of both Covenants, but specially of the New Covenant. The difference between the two Covenants is the difference between the blood of beasts, and the blood of the Lamb of God! The power of the New Covenant has no lesser measure than the worth of the blood of the Son of God! Your Christian experience ought to know of no standard of peace with God, and purity from sin, and power over the world, than the blood of Christ can give! If we would enter truly and fully into all the New Covenant is meant to be to us, let us beseech God to reveal to us the worth and the power of the blood of the Covenant, the precious blood of Christ!

The First Covenant was not brought in without blood. There could be no Covenant of friendship between a holy God and sinful men without atonement and reconciliation; and no atonement without a death as the penalty of sin. God shake: "I have given you the blood upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." The blood shed in death meant the death of a sacrifice slain for sin of man; the blood sprinkled on the altar meant that vicarious death accepted of God for the sinful one. No forgiveness, no covenant without blood-shedding.

All this was but type and shadow of what was one day to become a mysterious reality. What no thought of man or angel could have conceived, what even now passeth all understanding, the Eternal Son of God took flesh and blood, and then shed that blood as the blood of the New Covenant, not merely to ratify it, but to open the way for it and to make it possible. Yea, more, to be, in time and eternity, the living power by which entrance into the Covenant was to be obtained, and all life in it be secured. Until we learn to form our expectation of a life in the New Covenant, according to the inconceivable worth and power of the blood of God's Son, we never can have even an insight into the entirely supernatural and heavenly life that a child of God may live. Let us think for a moment on the threefold light in which Scripture teaches us to regard it.

In the passage from Hebrews ix. 15 we read "For this cause Christ is the Mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." The sins of the ages, of the First Covenant, which had only figuratively been atoned for, had gathered up before God. A death was needed for the redemption of these: In that death and blood-shedding of the Lamb of God not only were these atoned for, but the power of all sin was for ever broken.

The blood of the New Covenant is redemption blood, a purchase price and ransom from the power of Sin and the Law. In any purchase made on earth the transference of property from the old owner to the new is complete. Its worth may be ever so great and the hold on it ever so strong, if the price be paid, it is gone for ever from him who owned it. The hold sin had on us was terrible. No thought can realise its legitimate claim on us under God's law, its awful tyrant power in enslaving us. But the blood of God's Son has been paid. "Ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb without spot, even the blood of Christ." We have been rescued, ransomed, redeemed out of our old natural life under the power of sin, utterly and eternally. Sin has not the slightest claim on us, nor the slightest power over us, except as our ignorance or unbelief or half-heartedness allows it to have dominion. Our New Covenant birthright is to stand in the freedom with which Christ has made us free. Until the soul sees, and desires and accepts, and claims the redemption and the liberty which has the blood of the Son of God for its purchase price, and its measure, and its security, it never can fully live the New Covenant life.

As wonderful as the blood-shedding for our redemption is the blood-sprinkling for our cleansing. Here is indeed another of the spiritual mysteries of the New Covenant, which lose their power when understood in human wisdom, without the ministration of the Spirit of life. When Scripture speaks of "having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience," of "the blood of Christ cleansing our

conscience," of our singing here on earth (Rev. i. 5), "To Him that washed us from our sins in His blood," it brings this mighty, quickening blood of the Lamb into direct contact with our hearts. It gives the assurance that that blood, in its infinite worth, in its Divine sin-cleansing power, can keep us clean in our walk in the sight and the light of God. It is as this blood of the New Covenant is known, and trusted, and waited for, and received from God, in the Spirit's mighty operation in the heart, that we shall begin to believe that the blessed promise of a New Covenant life and walk can be fulfilled.

There is one more thing Scripture teaches concerning this blood of the New Covenant. When the Jews contrasted Moses with our Lord Jesus, He spake: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him." As if the redeeming, and sprinkling, and washing, and sanctifying does not sufficiently express the intense inwardness of its action and its power to permeate our whole being, the drinking of this precious blood is declared to be indispensable to having life. If we would enter deep into the Spirit and power of the New Covenant, let us, by the Holy Spirit, drink deep of this cup--the cup of the New Covenant in His blood.

On account of sin there could be no covenant between man and God without blood. And no New Covenant without the blood of the Son of God. As the cleansing away of sins was the first condition in making a covenant, so it is equally the first condition of an entrance into it. It has ever been found that a deeper appropriation of the blessings of the Covenant must be preceded by a new and deeper cleansing from sin. We know how in Ezekiel the words about God's causing us to walk in His statutes are preceded by "From all your filthiness will I cleanse you." And then later we read (xxxvii. 23, 25), "Neither shall they defile themselves any more with any of their transgressions; I will cleanse them: so shall they be My people, and I will be their God. Moreover, I will make a Covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting Covenant with them." The confession and casting away, and the cleansing away of sin in the blood, are the indispensable, but all-sufficient, preparation for a life in everlasting Covenant with God.

Many feel that they do not understand or realise this wonderful power of the blood. Much thought does not help them; even prayer does not appear to bring the light they seek. The blood of Christ is a Divine mystery that passes all thought. Like every spiritual and heavenly blessing, this too, but this especially, needs to be imparted to us by the Holy Spirit. It was "through the Eternal Spirit" that Christ offered the sacrifice in which the blood was shed. The blood had the life of Christ, the life of the Spirit, in it. The outpouring of the blood for us was to prepare the way for the outpouring of the Spirit on us. It is the Holy Spirit, and He alone, who can minister the blood of the everlasting Covenant in power. Just as He leads the soul to the initial faith in the pardon that blood has purchased, and the peace it gives, He leads further to the knowledge and experience of its cleansing power. Here again, too, by faith --a faith in a heavenly power, of which it does not fully understand, and cannot define, the action, but of which it knows that it is an operation of God's mighty power, and effects a cleansing that does give a clean heart. A clean heart, first known and accepted by the same faith, apart from signs or feelings, apart from sense or reason, and then experienced in the joy and the fellowship with God it brings. Oh! let us believe in the blood of the everlasting Covenant, and the cleansing the Holy Spirit ministers. Let us believe in the ministration of the Holy Spirit, until our whole life in the New Covenant becomes entirely His work, to the glory of the Father and of Christ.

The blood of the Covenant, O mystery of mysteries! O grace above all grace! O mighty power of God, opening the way, into the holiest, and into our hearts, and into the New Covenant, where the Holy One and our heart meet! Let us ask God much, by His Holy Spirit, to make us know what it is and works. The transition from the death of the Old Covenant to the life of the New was, in Christ, "through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant." No otherwise will it be with us.

CHAPTER X

Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant

"I give thee for a covenant of the people."--ISA. xlii. 6, xlix. 8.
"The Lord shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in."--MAL. iii. 1.
" Jesus was made Surety of a better covenant."--HEB. vii. 22.
"The Mediator of the Better Covenant, established upon better promises . . . The Mediator of the New Covenant. . . Ye are come to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant." --HEB. viii. 6, ix. 15, xii. 24.

WE have here four titles given to our Lord Jesus in connection with the New Covenant. He is Himself called a Covenant. The union between God and man, which the Covenant aims at, was wrought out in Him personally; in Him the reconciliation between the human and Divine was perfectly effected; in Him His people find the Covenant with all its blessings; He is all that God has to give, and is the assurance that it is given. . . He is called the Messenger of the Covenant, because He came to establish and to proclaim it. . . He is the Surety of the Covenant, not only because He paid our debt, but as He is Surety to us for God, that God will fulfil His part; and Surety for us with God, that we will fulfil our part. . . And He is Mediator of the Covenant, because as the Covenant was established in His atoning blood, is administered and applied by Him, is entered upon alone by faith in Him, so it is experimentally known only through the power of His resurrection life, and His never-ceasing intercession. All these names point to the one truth, that in the New Covenant Christ is all in all.

The subject is so large that it would be impossible to enter upon all the various aspects of this precious truth. Christ's work in atonement and intercession, in His bestowal of pardon and the Holy Spirit, in His daily communication of grace and strength, are truths which lie at the very foundation of the faith of Christians. We need not speak of them here. What specially needs to be made clear to many is how, by faith in Christ as the Mediator of the New Covenant, we actually have access to and enter into the enjoyment of all its promised blessings. We have already seen, in studying the New Covenant, how all these blessings culminate in the one thing-- that the heart of man is to be put right, as the only possible way of his living in the favour of God, and God's love finding its satisfaction in him. That he is to receive a heart to fear God, to love God with all his strength, to obey God, and to keep all His statutes. All that Christ did and does has this for its aim; all the higher blessings of peace and fellowship flow from this. In this God's saving power and love find the highest proof of their triumph over sin. Nothing so reveals the grace of God, the power of Jesus Christ, the reality of salvation, the blessedness of the New Covenant, as the heart of a believer, where sin once abounded, with grace now abounding more exceedingly within it.

I do not know how I can better set forth the glory of our Blessed Lord Jesus as He accomplishes this, the real object of His redeeming work, and as He takes entire possession of the heart He has bought and won and cleansed as a dwelling for His Father, than by pointing out the place He takes, and the work He does, in the case of a soul who is being led out of the Old Covenant bondage with its failure, into the real experience of the promise and power of the New Covenant. [6] In thus studying the work of the Mediator in an individual, we may get a truer conception of the real glory and greatness of the work He actually accomplishes, than when we only think of the work He has done for all. It is in the application of the redemption here in the life of earth, where sin abounded, that its power is seen. Let us see how the entrance into the New Covenant blessing is attained.

The first step towards it, in one who has been truly converted and assured of his acceptance with God, is the sense of sin. He sees that the New Covenant promises are not made true in his experience. There is not only indwelling sin, but he finds that he gives way to temper, and self-will, and worldliness, and other known transgressions of God's law. The obedience to which God calls and will fit him, the life of abiding in Christ's love which is his privilege, the power for a holy walk, well-pleasing to God,--in all this his conscience condemns him. It is in this conviction of sin that any thought or desire of the full New Covenant blessing must have its rise. Where the thought that obedience is an impossibility, and that nothing but a life of failure and self-condemnation is to be looked for, has wrought a secret despair of deliverance, or contentment with our present state, it is vain to speak of God's promise or power. The heart does not respond: it knows well enough, it is sure, the liberty spoken of is a dream. But where the dissatisfaction with our state has wrought a longing for something better, the heart is open to receive the message.

The New Covenant is meant to be the deliverance from the power of sin; a keen longing for this is the indispensable preparation for

entering fully into the Covenant.

Now comes the second step. As the mind is directed to the literal meaning of the terms of the New Covenant, in its promises of cleansing from sin, and a heart filled with God's fear and God's law, and a power to keep God's commands and never to depart from Him; as the eye is fixed on Jesus the Surety of the Covenant, who will Himself make it all true; and as the voice is heard of witnesses who can declare how, after years of bondage, all this has been fulfilled in them--the longing begins to grow into a hope, and the inquiry is made, as to what is needed to enter this blessed life.

Then follows another step. The heart-searching question comes whether we are willing to give up every evil habit, all our own self-will, all that is of the spirit of the world, and surrender ourselves to be wholly and exclusively for Jesus. God cannot take so complete possession of a man, and bless him so wonderfully, and work in him so mightily, unless He has him very completely, yea, wholly for Himself. Happy the man who is ready for any sacrifice.

Now comes the last, the simplest, and yet often the most difficult step. And here it is we need to know Jesus as Mediator of the Covenant. As we hear of the life of holiness, and obedience, and victory over sin, which the Covenant promises, and hear that it will be to us according to our faith, so that if we claim it in faith it will surely be ours, the heart often fails for fear. I am willing, but have I the power to make, and what is more, to maintain this full surrender? Have I the power, the strong faith, so to grasp and hold this offered blessing, that it shall indeed be and continue mine? How such questions perplex the soul until it finds the answer to them in the one word: Jesus! It is He who will bestow the power to make the surrender and to believe. This is as surely and as exclusively His work, as atonement and intercession are His alone. As sure as it was His to win and ascend the throne, it is His to prove His dominion in the individual soul. It is He, the Living One, who is in Divine power to work and maintain the life of communion and victory within us. He is the Mediator and Surety of the Covenant--He, the God-man, who has undertaken not only for all that God requires, but for all that we need too.

When this is seen, the believer learns that here, just as at conversion, it is all of faith. The one thing needed now is, with the eye definitely fixed on some promise of the New Covenant, to turn from self and anything it could or need do, to let go self, and fall into the arms of Jesus. He is the Mediator of the New Covenant: it is His to lead us into it. In the assurance that Jesus, and every New Covenant blessing, is already ours in virtue of our being God's children; with the desire now to appropriate and enjoy what we have hitherto allowed to lie unused; in the faith that Jesus now gives us the needed strength in faith to claim and accept our heritage as a present possession; the will dares boldly to do the deed, and to take the heavenly gift--a life in Christ according to the better promises. By faith in Jesus you have seen and received Him as to you, in full truth, the Mediator of the New Covenant, both in heaven arid in your heart. He is the Mediator who makes it true between God and you, as your experience.

The fear has sometimes been expressed that, if we press so urgently the work that Christ through the Spirit does in the heart, we may be drawn off from trusting in what He has done and ever is doing, to what we are experiencing of its working. The answer is simple. It is with the heart alone that Christ can be truly known or honoured. It is in the heart the work of grace is to be done, and the saving power of Christ to be displayed. It is in the heart alone the Holy Spirit has His sphere of work; there He is to work Christ's likeness; it is there alone He can glorify Christ. The Spirit can only glorify Christ by revealing His saving power in us. If we were to speak of what we are to do in cleansing our heart and keeping it right, the fear would be well-grounded. But the New Covenant calls us to the very opposite. What it tells us of the Atonement, and the Righteousness of God it has won for us, will be our only glory even amid the highest holiness of heaven: Christ's work of holiness here in the heart can only deepen the consciousness of that Righteousness as our only plea. The sanctification of the Spirit, as the fulfilment of the New Covenant promises, is all a taking of the things of Christ and revealing and imparting them to us. The deeper our entrance into and our possession of the New Covenant gift of a new heart, the fuller will be our knowledge and our love of Him who is its Mediator; the more we shall glory in Him alone. The Covenant deals with the heart, just that Christ may be found there, may dwell there by faith. As we look at the heart, not in the light of feeling or experience, but in the light of the faith of God's Covenant, we shall learn to think and speak of it as God does, and begin to know what it is, that there Christ manifests Himself and there He and the Father come to make their abode.

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[6] For a practical illustration in the life of Canon Battersby, see Note D.

NOTE D. -- CHAP. X

Canon Battersby

I do not know that I can find a better case by which to illustrate the place Christ, the Mediator of the Covenant, takes in leading into its full blessing than that of the founder of the Keswick Convention, the late Canon Battersby.

It was at the Oxford Convention in 1873 that he witnessed to having "received a new and distinct blessing to which he had been a stranger before." For more than twenty-five years he had been most diligent as a minister of the gospel, and, as appears from his journals, most faithful in seeking to maintain a close walk with God. But he was ever disturbed by the consciousness of being overcome by sin. So far back as 1853 he had written, "I feel again how very far I am from enjoying habitually that peace and love and joy which Christ promises. I must confess that I have it not; and that very ungentle and unchristian tempers often strive within me for the mastery." When in 1873 he read what was being published of the Higher Life, the effect was to render him utterly dissatisfied with himself and his state. There were indeed difficulties he could not quite understand in that teaching, but he felt that he must either reach forward to better things, nothing less than redemption from all iniquities, or fall back more and more into worldliness and sin. At Oxford he heard an address on the rest of faith. It opened his eyes to the truth that a believer who really longs for deliverance from sinning must simply take Christ at His word, and reckon, without feeling, on Him to do His work of cleansing and keeping the soul. "I thought of the sufficiency of Jesus, and said, I will rest in Him, and I did rest in Him. I was afraid lest it should be a passing emotion; but I found that a presence of Jesus was graciously manifested to me in a way I knew not before, and that I did abide in Him. I do not want to rest in these emotions, but just to believe, and to cling to Christ as my all." He was a man of very reserved nature, but felt it a duty ere the close of the Conference to confess publicly his past shortcoming, and testify openly to his having entered upon a new and definite experience.

In a paper written not long after this he pointed out what the steps are leading to this experience. First, a clear view of the possibilities of Christian attainment--a life in word and action, habitually governed by the Spirit, in constant communion with God, and continual victory over sin through abiding in Christ. Then, the deliberate purpose of the will for a full renunciation of all the idols of the flesh or spirit, and a will-surrender to Christ. And then this last and important step: We must look up to, and wait upon our ascended Lord for all that we need to enable us to do this.

A careful perusal of this very brief statement will prove how everything centred here in Christ. The surrender for a life of continual communion and victory is to be to Christ. The strength for that life is to be in Him and from Him, by faith in Him. And the power to make the full surrender and rest in Him was to be waited for from Him alone.

In June 1875 the first Keswick Convention was held. In the circular calling it, we read : "Many are everywhere thirsting that they may be brought to enjoy more of the Divine presence in their daily life, and a fuller manifestation of the Holy Spirit's power, whether in subduing the lusts of the flesh, or in enabling them to offer more effective service to God. It is certainly God's will that His children should be satisfied in regard to these longings, and there are those who can testify that He has satisfied them, and does satisfy them with daily fresh manifestations of His grace and power." The results of the very first Convention were most blessed, so that after its close he wrote: "There is a very remarkable resemblance in the testimonies I have since received as to the nature of the blessing obtained, viz., the ability given to make a full surrender to the Lord, and the cousequent experience of an abiding peace, far exceeding anything previously experienced." Through all the chief thought, was Christ, first drawing and enabling the soul to rest in Him, and then meeting it with the fulfilment of its desire, the abiding experience of His power to keep it in victory over sin, and communion with God.

And what was the fruit of this new experience? Eight years later Canon Battersby spoke; "It is now eight years since that I knew this blessing as my own. I cannot say that I have never for a moment ceased to trust the Lord to keep me. But I can say that so long as I have trusted Him, He has kept me; He has been faithful."

CHAPTER XI

Jesus, the Surety of a Better Covenant

"And inasmuch as it is not without the taking of an oath: by so much also hath Jesus become the Surety of a better covenant. Wherefore also He is able to save completely them that draw near unto God through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."-HEB. vii. 20, 22, 25.

A SURETY is one who stands good for another, that a certain engagement will be faithfully performed. Jesus is the Surety of the New Covenant. He stands surety with us for God--, that God's part in the Covenant will faithfully be performed. And He stands surety with God for us, that our part will be faithfully performed too. If we are to live in covenant with God, everything depends upon our knowing aright what Jesus secures to us. The more we know and trust Him, the more assured will our faith be that its every promise and every demand will be fulfilled, that a life of faithful keeping of God's Covenant is indeed possible, because Jesus is the Surety of the Covenant. He makes God's faithfulness and ours equally sure.

We read that it was because His priesthood was confirmed by the oath of God, that He became the Surety of a so much better Covenant. The oath of God gives us the security that His suretyship will secure all the better promises. The meaning and infinite value of God's oath had been explained in the previous chapter. "In every dispute the oath is final for confirmation. Wherein God, being minded to show more abundantly unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of His counsel, interposed with an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong encouragement." We thus have not only a Covenant, with certain definite promises; we have not only Jesus, the Surety of the Covenant; but at the back of that again, we have the living God, with a view to our having perfect confidence in the unchangeableness of His counsel and promise, coming in between with an oath. Do we not begin to see that the one thing God aims at in this Covenant, and asks with regard to it, is an absolute confidence that He is going to do all He has promised, however difficult or wonderful it may appear? His oath is an end of all fear or doubt. Let no one think of understanding the Covenant, of judging or saying what may be expected from it, much less of experiencing its blessings, until he meets God with an Abrahamlike faith, that gives Him the glory, and is fully assured that what He has promised He is able to perform. The Covenant is a sealed mystery, except to the soul who is going without reserve to trust God, and abandon itself to His word and work.

Of the work of Christ, as the Surety of the better Covenant, our passage tells us that, because of this priesthood confirmed by oath, He is able to save completely those who draw near to God through Him. And this, because "He ever liveth to make intercession for them." As Surety of the Covenant, He is ceaselessly engaged in watching their needs, and presenting them to the Father, in receiving His answer, and imparting its blessing. It is because of this never-ceasing mediation, receiving and transmitting from God to us the gifts and powers of the heavenly world, that He is able to save completely--to work and maintain in us a salvation as complete as God is willing it should be, as complete as the Better Covenant has assured us it shall be, in the better promises upon which it was established. These promises are expounded (ch. viii. 7-13) as being none other than those of the New Covenant of Jeremiah, with the law written in the heart by the Spirit of God as our experience of the power of that salvation.

Jesus, the Surety of a better Covenant, Jesus is to be our assurance that everything connected with the Covenant is unchangeably and eternally sure. In Jesus the keynote is given of all our intercourse with God, of all our prayers and desires, of all our life and walk, that with full assurance of faith and hope we may look for every word of the Covenant to be made fully true to us by God's own power. Let us look at some of these things of which we are to be fully assured, if we are to breathe the spirit of children of the New Covenant. There is the love of God. The very thought of a Covenant is an alliance of friendship. And it is as a means of assuring us of His love, of drawing us close to His heart of love, of getting our hearts under the power of His love, and filled with it--it is because God loves us with an infinite love, and wants us to know it, and to give it complete liberty to bestow itself on us, and bless us, that the New Covenant has been made, and God's own Son been made its Surety. This love of God is an infinite Divine energy, doing its utmost to fill the soul with itself and its blessedness. Of this love God's Son is the Messenger; of the Covenant in which God reveals it to us He is the Surety; let us learn that the chief need in studying the Covenant and keeping it, in seeking and claiming its blessings, is the exercise of a strong and confident assurance in God's love.

Then there is the assurance of the sufficiency of Christ's finished redemption. All that was needed to put away sin, to free us entirely and for ever from its power, has been accomplished by Christ. His blood and death, His resurrection and ascension, have taken us out of the power of the world and transplanted us into a new life in the power of the heavenly world. All this is Divine reality; Christ

is Surety that the Divine righteousness, and the Divine acceptance, that all-sufficient Divine grace and strength, are ever ours. He is Surety that all these can and will be communicated to us in unbroken continuance.

It is even so with the assurance of what is needed on our part to enter into this life in the New Covenant. We shrink back, either from the surrender of all, because we know not whether we have the power to let it go, or from the faith for all, because we fear ours will never be so strong or so bold as to take all that is offered us in this wonderful Covenant. Jesus is Surety of a better Covenant. The better consists just in this very thing, that it undertakes to provide the children of the Covenant with the very dispositions they need, to accept and enjoy it. We have seen how the heart is just the central object of the Covenant promise. A heart circumcised to love God with all the heart, a heart into which God's law and fear have been put, so that it will not depart from Him--it is of all this Jesus is the Surety under the oath of God. Let us say it once more: Surely the one thing God asks of us, and has given the Covenant and its Surety to secure--the confident trust that all will be done in us that is needed---is what we dare not withhold.

I think some of us are beginning to see what has been our great mistake. We have thought and spoken great things of what Christ did on the Cross, and does on the Throne, as Covenant Surety. And we have stopped there. But we have not expected Him to do great things in our hearts. And yet it is there, in our heart, that the consummation takes place of the work on the Cross and the Throne; in the heart the New Covenant has its full triumph; the Surety is to be known not by what the mind can think of Him in heaven, but by what he does to make Himself known in the heart. There is the place where His love triumphs and is enthroned. Let us with the heart believe and receive Him as the Covenant Surety. Let us, with every desire we entertain in connection with it, with every duty it calls us to, with every promise it holds out, look to Jesus, under God's oath the Surety of the Covenant. Let us believe that by the Holy Spirit the heart is His home and His throne. Let us, if we have not done it yet, in a definite act of faith, throw ourselves utterly on Him, for the whole of the New Covenant life and walk. No surety was ever so faithful to his undertaking as Jesus will be to His on our behalf, in our hearts.

And now, notwithstanding the strong confidence and consolation the oath of God and the Surety of the Covenant gives, there are some still looking wistfully at this blessed life, and yet afraid to trust themselves to this wondrous grace. They have a conception of faith as something great and mighty, and they know and feel that theirs is not such. And so their feebleness remains an insuperable barrier to their inheriting the promise. Let me try and say once again: Brother, the act of faith, by which you accept and enter this life in the New Covenant, is not commonly an act of power, but often of weakness and fear and much trembling. And even in the midst of all this feebleness, it is not an act in your strength, but in a secret and perhaps unfelt strength, which Jesus the Surety of the Covenant gives you. God has made Him Surety, with the very object of inspiring us with courage and confidence. He longs, He delights to bring you into the Covenant. Why not bow before Him, and say meekly: He does hear prayer; He brings into the Covenant; He enables a soul to believe; I may trust Him confidently. And just begin quietly to believe that there is an Almighty Lord, given by the Father, to do everything needed to make all Covenant grace wholly true in you. Bow low, and look up out of your low estate to your glorified Lord, and maintain your confidence that a soul, that in its nothingness trusts in Him, will receive more than it can ask or think.

Dear believer, come and be a believer. Believe that God is showing you how entirely the Lord Jesus wants to have you and your life for Himself; how entirely He is willing to take charge of you and work all in you; how entirely you may even now commit your trust, and your surrender, and your faithfulness to the Covenant, with all you are and are to be, to Him, your Blessed Surety. If thou believest, thou shalt see the glory of God. What Christ has undertaken, you may confidently count upon His performing.

In a sense, and measure, and power that passeth knowledge, Jesus Christ is Himself all that God can either ask or give, all that God wants to see in us. "He that believeth in me, out of him shall flow rivers of living water."

CHAPTER XII

The Book of the Covenant

"And Moses took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words."-EX. xxiv. 7, 8; comp. HEB. ix. 18-20.

HERE is a new aspect in which to regard God's blessed Book. Before Moses sprinkled the blood, he read the Book of the Covenant, and obtained the people's acceptance of it. And when he had sprinkled it, he said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made concerning all these words." The Book contained all the conditions of the Covenant; only through the Book could they know all that God asked of them, and all that they might ask of Him. Let us consider what new light may be thrown both upon the Covenant and upon the Book, by the one thought, that the Bible is the Book of the Covenant.

The very first thought suggested will be this, that in nothing will the spirit of our life and experience, as it lives either in the Old or the New Covenant, be more manifest than in our dealings with the Book. The Old had a book as well as the New. Our Bible contains both. The New was enfolded in the Old; the Old is unfolded in the New. It is possible to read the Old in the spirit of the New; it is possible to read the New as well as the Old in the spirit of the Old.

What this spirit of the Old is, we cannot see so clearly anywhere as just in Israel when the Covenant was made. They were at once ready to promise: "All that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient." There was so little sense of their own sinfulness, or of the holiness and glory of God, that with perfect self-confidence they considered themselves able to undertake to keep the Covenant. They understood little of the meaning of that blood with which they were sprinkled, or of that death and redemption of which it was the symbol. In their own strength, in the power of the flesh, they were ready to engage to serve God. It is just the spirit in which many Christians regard the Bible; as a system of laws, a course of instruction to direct us in the way God would have us go. All He asks of us is, that we should do our utmost in seeking to fulfil them; more we cannot do; this we are sincerely ready to do. They know little or nothing of what the death means through which the Covenant is established, or what the life from the dead is through which alone a man can walk in covenant with the God of heaven.

This self-confident spirit in Israel is explained by what had happened just previously. When God had come down on Mount Sinai in thunderings and lightnings to give the law, they were greatly afraid. They said to Moses: "Let not God speak with us, lest we die; speak thou with us, and we will hear." They thought it was simply a matter of hearing and knowing; they could for certain obey. They knew not that it is only the presence, and the fear, and the nearness, and the power of God humbling us and making us afraid, that can conquer the power of sin and give the power to obey. It is so much easier to receive the instruction from man, and live, than to wait and hear the voice of God and die to all our own strength and goodness. It is no otherwise that many Christians seek to serve God without ever seeking to live in daily contact with Him, and without the faith that it is only His presence can keep from sin. Their religion is a matter of outward instruction from man: the waiting to hear God's voice that they may obey Him, the death to the flesh and the world that comes with a close walk with God, are unknown. They may be faithful and diligent in the study of their Bible, in reading or hearing Bible teaching; to have as much as possible of that intercourse with the Covenant God Himself which makes the Christian life possible--this they do not seek.

If you would be delivered from all this, learn ever to read the Book of the New Covenant in the New Covenant Spirit. One of the very first articles of the New Covenant has reference to this matter. When God says, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, He engages that the words of His Holy Book shall no longer be mere outward teaching, but that what they command shall be our very disposition and delight, wrought in us as a birth and a life by the Holy Spirit. Every word of the New Covenant then becomes a Divine assurance of what may be obtained by the Holy Spirit's working. The soul learns to see that the letter killeth, that the flesh profiteth nothing. The study, and knowledge of, the delight in, Bible words and thoughts, cannot profit, except as the Holy Spirit is waited on to make them life. The acceptance of Holy Scripture in the letter, the reception of it in the human understanding, is seen to be as fruitless as was Israel's at Sinai. But as the Word of God, spoken by the Living God through the Spirit into the heart that waits on Him, it is found to be quick and powerful. It then is a word that worketh effectually in them that believe, giving within the heart the actual possession of the very grace of which the Word has spoken.

The New Covenant is a ministration of the Spirit (see Chap. VII). All its teaching is meant to be teaching by the Holy Spirit. The two most remarkable chapters in the Bible on the preaching of the gospel are those in which Paul expounds the secret of this teaching (1 Cor. ii.; 2 Cor. iii.). Every minister ought to see whether he can pass his examination in them. They tell us that in the New Covenant the Holy Spirit is everything. It is the Holy Spirit entering the heart, writing, revealing, impressing upon it God's law and truth, that alone works true obedience. No excellency of speech or human wisdom can in the least profit: God must reveal by His Holy Spirit to preacher and hearer the things He hath prepared for us. What is true of the preacher is equally true of the hearer. One of the great reasons that so many Christians never come out of the Old Covenant, never even know that they are in it, and have to come out of it, is that there is so much head knowledge, without the power of the Spirit in the heart being waited for. It is only when preachers and hearers and readers believe that the Book of the New Covenant needs the Spirit of the New Covenant, to explain and apply it, that the Word of God can do its work.

Learn the double lesson. What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. The Bible is the Book of the New Covenant. And the Holy Spirit is the only minister of what belongs to the Covenant. Expect not to understand or profit by thy Bible knowledge without seeking continually the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Beware lest thy earnest Bible study, thy excellent books, or thy beloved teachers take the place of the Holy Spirit! Pray daily, and perseveringly, and believingly for His teaching. He will write the Word in thy heart.

The Bible is the Book of the New Covenant. Ask the Holy Spirit specially to reveal to thee the New Covenant in it. It is inconceivable what loss the Church of our day is suffering because so few believers truly live as its heirs, in the true knowledge and enjoyment of its promises. Ask God, in humble faith, to give thee in all thy Bible reading, the spirit of wisdom and revelation, enlightened eyes of thine heart, to know what the promises are which the Covenant reveals; and what the Divine security in Jesus, the Surety of the Covenant, that every promise will be fulfilled in thee in Divine power; and what the intimate fellowship to which it admits thee with the God of the Covenant. The ministration of the Spirit, humbly waited for and listened to, will make the Book of the Covenant shine with new light-- even the light of God's countenance and a full salvation.

All this applies specially to the knowledge of what actually the New Covenant is meant to work. Amid all we hear, and read, and understand of the different promises of the New Covenant, it is quite possible that we never yet have had that heavenly vision of it as a whole, that with its overmastering power compels acceptance. Just hear once again what it really is. True obedience, and fellowship with God, for which man was created, which sin broke off, which the law demanded, but could not work, which God's own Son came from heaven to restore in our lives, is now brought within our reach and offered us. Our Father tells us in the Book of the New Covenant that He now expects us to live in full and unbroken obedience and communion with Him. He tells us that by the mighty power of His Son and Spirit He Himself will work this in us: everything has been arranged for it. He tells us that such a life of unbroken obedience is possible because Christ, as the Mediator, will live in us and enable us each moment to live in Him. He tells us that all He wants is simply the surrender of faith, the yielding ourselves to Him to do His work. Oh! let us look, and see this holy life, with all its powers and blessings, coming down from God in heaven, in the Son and His Spirit. Let us believe that the Holy Spirit can give us a vision of it, as a prepared Gift, to be bestowed in living power, and take possession of us. Let us look upward and look inward, in the faith of the Son and the Spirit, and God will show us that every word written in the Book of the Covenant is not only true, but that it can be made spirit and truth within us, and in our daily life. This can indeed be.

CHAPTER XIII

New Covenant Obedience

"Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a holy nation unto Me."-EX. xix. 5.
"And the Lord Thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul. And thou shalt obey the voice of the Lord, and do all His commandments."--DEUT.xxx. 6, 8.
"And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments."--EZEK.xxxvi. 27.

IN making the New Covenant, God said very definitely, "Not after the covenant I made with your fathers." We have learnt what the fault was with that Covenant: it made God's favour dependent upon the obedience of the people. "If ye obey, I will be your God." We have learnt how the New Covenant remedied the defect: God Himself provided for the obedience. It changes "If ye keep My judgments" into "I will put My Spirit within you, and ye shall keep." Instead of the Covenant and its fulfilment depending on man's obedience, God undertakes to ensure the obedience. The Old Covenant proved the need, and pointed out the path, of holiness: the New inspires the love, and gives the power, of holiness.

In connection with this change, a serious and most dangerous mistake is often made. Because in the New Covenant obedience no longer occupies the place it had in the Old, as the condition of the Covenant, and free grace has taken its place, justifying the ungodly, and bestowing gifts on the rebellious, many are under the impression that obedience is now no longer as indispensable as it was then. The error is a terrible one. The whole Old Covenant was meant to teach the lesson of the absolute and indispensable necessity of obedience for a life in God's favour. The New Covenant comes, not to provide a substitute for that obedience in faith, but through faith to secure the obedience, by giving a heart that delights in it and has the power for it. And men abuse the free grace, that without our own obedience accepts us for a life of new obedience, when they rest content with the grace, without the obedience it is meant for. They boast of the higher privileges of the New Covenant, while its chief blessing, the power of a holy life, a heart delighting in God's law, and a life in which God causes and enables us, by his indwelling Spirit, to keep His commandments, is neglected. If there is one thing we need to know well, it is the place obedience takes in the New Covenant.

Let our first thought be: Obedience is essential. At the very root of the relation of a creature to his God, and of God admitting the creature to His fellowship, lies the thought of obedience. It is the one only thing God spoke of in Paradise when "the Lord God commanded the man" not to eat of the forbidden fruit. In Christ's great salvation it is the power that redeemed us: "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." In the promise of the New Covenant it takes the first place. God engages to circumcise the hearts of His people --in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ--to love God with all their heart, and to obey His commandments. The crowning gift of Christ's exaltation was the Holy Ghost, to bring salvation to us as an inward thing. The first Covenant demanded obedience, and failed because it could not find it. The New Covenant was expressly made to provide for obedience. To a life in the full experience of the New Covenant blessing, obedience is essential.

It is this indispensable necessity of obedience that explains why so often the entrance into the full enjoyment of the New Covenant has depended upon some single act of surrender. There was something in the life, some evil or doubtful habit, in regard to which conscience had often said that it was not in perfect accord with God's perfect will. Attempts were made to push aside the troublesome suggestion. Or unbelief said it would be impossible to overcome the habit, and maintain the promise of obedience to the Voice within. Meantime, all our prayer appeared of no avail. It was as if faith could not lay hold of the blessing which was full in sight, until at last the soul consented to regard this little thing as the test of its surrender to obey in everything, and of its faith that in everything the Surety of the Covenant would give power to maintain the obedience. With the evil or doubtful thing given up, with a good conscience restored, and the heart's confidence before God assured, the soul could receive and possess what it sought. Obedience is essential.

Obedience is possible. The thought of a demand which man cannot possibly render, cuts at the very root of true hope and strength. The secret thought, " No man can obey God," throws thousands back into the Old Covenant life, and into a false peace that God does not expect more than that we do our best. Obedience is possible: the whole New Covenant promises and secures this.

Only understand aright what obedience means. The renewed man has still the flesh, with its evil nature, out of which there arise involuntary evil thoughts and dispositions. These may be found in a truly obedient man. Obedience deals with the doing of what is known to be God's will, as taught by the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and conscience. When George Muller spoke of the great happiness he had had for more than sixty years in God's service, he attributed it two things--He had loved God's Word, and "he had maintained a good conscience, not wilfully going on in a course he knew to be contrary to the mind of God." When the full light of God broke in upon Gerhard Tersteegen, he wrote: "I promise, with Thy help and power, rather to give up the last drop of my blood, than knowingly and willingly in my heart or my life be untrue and disobedient to Thee." Such obedience is an attainable degree of grace.

Obedience is possible. When the law is written in the heart; when the heart is circumcised to love the Lord with all our heart, and to obey Him; when the love of God is shed abroad in the heart; it means that the love of God's law and of Himself has now become the moving power of our life. This love is no vague sentiment, in man's imagination of something that exists in heaven, but a living, mighty power of God in the heart, working effectually according to His working, which worketh in us mightily. A life of obedience is possible.

This obedience is of faith. "By faith, Abraham obeyed." By faith the promises of the Covenant, the presence of the Surety of the Covenant, the hidden inworking of the Holy Spirit, and the love of God in His infinite desire and power to make true in us all His love and promises, must live in us. Faith can bring them nigh, and make us live in the very midst of them. Christ and His wonderful redemption need not remain at a distance from us in heaven, but can become our continual experience. However cold or feeble we may feel, faith knows that the new heart is in us, that the love of God's law is our very nature, that the teaching and power of the Spirit are within us. Such faith knows it can obey. Let us hear the voice of our Saviour, the Surety of the Covenant, as He says, with a deeper, fuller meaning than when He was on earth: "Only believe. If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."

And last of all, let us understand: Obedience is blessedness. Do not regard it only as the way to the joy and blessings of the New Covenant, but as itself, in its very nature, joy and happiness. To have the voice of God teaching and guiding you, to be united to God in willing what He wills, in working out what He works in you by His Spirit, in doing His Holy Will, and pleasing Him,--surely all this is joy unspeakable and full of glory.

To a healthy man it is a delight to walk or work, to put forth his strength and conquer difficulties. To a slave or a hireling it is bondage and weariness. The Old Covenant demanded obedience with an inexorable must, and the threat that followed it. The New Covenant changes the must to can and may. Do ask God, by the Holy Spirit, to show you how "you have been created in Christ Jesus unto good works, "and how, as fitted as a vine is for bearing grapes, your new nature is perfectly prepared for every good work. Ask Him to show you that He means obedience, not only to be a possible thing, but the most delightful and attractive gift He has to bestow, the entrance into His love and all its blessedness.

In the New Covenant the chief thing is not the wonderful treasure of strength and grace it contains, nor the Divine security that that treasure never can fail, but this, that the living God gives Himself, and makes Himself known, and takes possession of us as our God. For this man was created, for this He was redeemed again, for this, that it maybe our actual experience, the Holy Spirit has been given and is dwelling in us. Between what God has already wrought in us, and what He waits to work, obedience is the blessed link. Let us seek to walk before Him in the confidence that we are of those who live in the noble and holy consciousness: my one work is to obey God. [7] What can be the reason, I ask once again, that so many believers have seen so little of the beauty of this New Covenant life, with its power of holy and joyful obedience? "Their eyes were holden that they knew Him not." The Lord was with the disciples, but their hearts were blind. It is so still. It is as with Elisha's servant, all heaven is around him and he knows it not. Nothing will help but the prayer, "Lord, open his eyes, that he may see." Lord, is there not someone who may be reading this, who just needs one touch to see it all? Oh! give that touch!

Just listen, my brother. Thy Father loves thee with an infinite love, and longs to make thee, even to-day, His holy, happy, obedient child. Hear His message: He has for thee an entirely different life from what thou art living. A life in which His grace shall actually work in thee every moment all He asks thee to be. A life of simple childlike obedience, doing for the day just what the Father shows thee to be His will. A life in which the abiding love of thy Father, and the abiding presence of thy Saviour, and the joy of the Holy Spirit, can keep thee, and make thee glad and strong. This is His message. This life is for thee. Fear not to accept this life, to give up thyself to it and its entire obedience. In Christ it is possible, it is sure.

Now, my brother, just turn heavenward and ask the Father, by the Holy Spirit, to show thee the beautiful heavenly life. Ask and expect it. Keep thine eyes fixed upon it. The great blessing of the New Covenant is obedience; the wonderful power to will and do as

God wills. It is indeed the entrance to every other blessing. It is paradise restored and heaven opened--the creature honouring his Creator, the Creator delighting in His creature; the child glorifying the Father, the Father glorifying the child, as He changes him, from glory to glory, into the likeness of His Son.

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[7] In a volume just published, The School of Obedience, the thoughts of this chapter are more fully worked out.

CHAPTER XIV

The New Covenant: a Covenant of Grace

"Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."-ROM. vi. 14.

THE words, Covenant of grace, though not found in Scripture, are the correct expression of the truth it abundantly teaches, that the contrast between the two covenants is none other than that of law and grace. Of the New Covenant, grace is the great characteristic: "The law came in, that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly." It is to bring the Romans away entirely from under the Old Covenant, and to teach them their place in the New, that Paul writes: " Ye are not under the law, but under grace." And he assures them that if they believe this, and live in it, their experience would confirm God's promise: "Sin shall not have dominion over you." What the law could not do--give deliverance from the power of sin over us--grace would effect. The New Covenant was entirely a Covenant of grace. In the wonderful grace of God it had its origin; it was meant to be a manifestation of the riches and the glory of that grace; of grace, and by grace working in us, all its promises can be fulfilled and experienced.

The word grace is used in two senses. It is first the gracious disposition in God which moves Him to love us freely without our merit, and to bestow all His blessings upon us. Then it also means that power through which this grace does its work in us. The redeeming work of Christ, and the righteousness He won for us; equally with the work of the Spirit in us, as the power of the new life, are spoken of as Grace. It includes all that Christ has done and still does, all He has and gives, all He is for us and in us. John says, "We beheld His glory, the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." "The law was given by Moses grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." "And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." What the law demands, grace supplies.

The contrast which John pointed out is expounded by Paul: "The law came in, that the offence might abound," and the way be prepared for the abounding of grace more exceedingly. The law points the way, but gives no strength to walk in it. The law demands, but makes no provision for its demands being met. The law burdens and condemns and slays. It can waken desire, but not satisfy it. It can rouse to effort, but not secure success. It can appeal to motives, but gives no inward power beyond what man himself has. And so, while warring against sin, it became its very ally in giving the sinner over to a hopeless condemnation." The strength of sin is the law."

To deliver us from the bondage and the dominion of sin, grace came by Jesus Christ. Its work is twofold. Its exceeding abundance is seen in the free and full pardon there is of all transgression, in the bestowal of a perfect righteousness, and in the acceptance into God's favour and friendship. "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sin according to the riches of His grace." It is not only at conversion and our admittance into God's favour, but throughout all our life, at each step of our way, and amid the highest attainments of the most advanced saint; we owe everything to grace, and grace alone. The thought of merit and work and worthiness is for ever excluded.

The exceeding abundance of grace is equally seen in the work which the Holy Spirit every moment maintains within us. We have found that the central blessing of the New Covenant, flowing from Christ's redemption and the pardon of our sins, is the new heart in which God's law and fear and love have been put. It is in the fulfilment of this promise, in the maintenance of the heart in a state of meetness for God's indwelling, that the glory of grace is specially seen. In the very nature of things this must be so. Paul writes: "Where sin abounded, grace did more exceedingly abound." And where, as far as I was concerned, did sin abound? All the sin in earth and hell could not harm me, were it not for its presence in my heart. It is there it has exercised its terrible dominion. And it is there the exceeding abundance of grace must be proved, if it is to benefit me. All grace in earth and heaven could not help me; it is only in the heart it can be received, and known, and enjoyed. "Where sin abounded," in the heart, there "grace did more exceedingly abound; that as sin reigned in death," working its destruction in the heart and life, "even so might grace reign," in the heart too, "through righteousness into eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." As had been said just before, "They that receive the abundance of grace shall reign in life through Jesus Christ."

Of this reign of grace in the heart Scripture speaks wondrous things. Paul speaks of the grace that fitted him for his work, of "the gift of that grace of God which was given me according to the working of His power." "The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love." "The grace which was bestowed upon me was not found vain, but I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." "He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; My strength is made perfect in

weakness." He speaks in the same way of grace as working in the life of believers, when he exhorts them to "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus"; when he tells us of "the grace of God" exhibited in the liberality of the Macedonian Christians, and "the exceeding grace of God" in the Corinthians; when he encourages them: "God is able to make all grace abound in you, that ye may abound unto every good work." Grace is not only the power that moves the heart of God in its compassion towards us, when He acquits and accepts the sinner and makes him a child, but is equally the power that moves the heart of the saint, and provides it each moment with just the disposition and the power which it needs to love God and do His will.

It is impossible to speak too strongly of the need there is to know that, as wonderful and free and alone sufficient as is the grace that pardons, is the grace that sanctifies; we are just as absolutely dependent upon the latter as the former. We can do as little to the one as the other. The grace that works in us must as exclusively do all in us and through us as the grace that pardons does all for us. In the one case as the other, everything is by faith alone. Not to apprehend this brings a double danger. On the one hand, people think that grace cannot be more exalted than in the bestowal of pardon on the vile and unworthy; and a secret feeling arises that, if God be so magnified by our sins more than anything else, we must not expect to be freed from them in this life. With many this cuts at the root of the life of true holiness. On the other hand, from not knowing that grace is always and alone to do all the work in our sanctification and fruit-bearing, men are thrown upon their own efforts, their life remains one of feebleness and bondage under the law, and they never yield themselves to let grace do all it would.

Let us listen to what God's Word says: "By grace have ye been saved, through faith; not of works, lest any man should glory. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them." Grace stands in contrast to good works of our own not only before conversion, but after conversion too. We are created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God had prepared for us. It is grace alone can work them in us and work them out through us. Not only the commencement but the continuance of the Christian life is the work of grace. "Now if it is by grace it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace; therefore it is of faith that it may be according to grace." As we see that grace is literally and absolutely to do all in us, so that all our actings are the showing forth of grace in us, we shall consent to live the life of faith--a life in which, every moment, everything is expected from God. It is only then that we shall experience that sin shall not, never, not for a moment, have dominion over us.

"Ye are not under the law, but under grace." There are three possible lives. One entirely under the law; one entirely under grace; one a mixed life, partly law, partly grace. It is this last against which Paul warns the Romans. It is this which is so common, and works such ruin among Christians. Let us find out whether this is not our position, and the cause of our low state. Let us beseech God to open our eyes by the Holy Spirit to see that in the New Covenant everything, every movement, every moment of our Christian life, is of grace, abounding grace; grace abounding exceedingly, and working mightily. Let us believe that our Covenant God waits to cause all grace to abound toward us. And let us begin to live the life of faith that depends upon, and trusts in, and looks to, and ever waits for God, through Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit, to work in us that which is pleasing in His sight.

Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied!

CHAPTER XV

The Covenant of an Everlasting Priesthood

"That My covenant might be with Levi. My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared Me, and was afraid before My name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips; he walked with Me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity."--MAL. ii. 4-6.

ISRAEL was meant by God to be a nation of priests. In the first making of the Covenant this was distinctly stipulated. "If ye will obey My voice, and keep My covenant, ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests." They were to be the stewards of the oracles of God; the channels through whom God's knowledge and blessing were to be communicated to the world; in them all nations were to be blessed.

Within the people of Israel one tribe was specially set apart to embody and emphasise the priestly idea. The first-born sons of the whole people were to have been the priests. But to secure a more complete separation from the rest of the people, and the entire giving up of any share in their possessions and pursuits, God chose one tribe to be exclusively devoted to the work of proving what constitutes the spirit and the power of priesthood. Just as the priesthood of the whole people was part of God's Covenant with them, so the special calling of Levi is spoken of as God's Covenant of Life and Peace being with Him, as the Covenant of an everlasting priesthood. All this was to be a picture to help them and us, in some measure, to apprehend the priesthood of His own Blessed Son, the Mediator of the New Covenant.

Like Israel, all God's people, under the New Covenant, are a royal priesthood. The right of free and full access to God, the duty and power of mediating for our fellowmen and being God's channel of blessing to them, is the inalienable birthright of every believer. Owing to the feebleness and incapacity of many of God's children, their ignorance of the mighty grace of the New Covenant, they are utterly impotent to take up and exercise their priestly functions. To make up for this lack of service, to show forth the exceeding riches of His grace in the New Covenant, and the power He gives men of becoming, just as the priests of old were the forerunners of the Great High Priest, His followers and representatives, God still allows and invites those of His redeemed ones who are willing, to offer their lives to this blessed ministry. To him who accepts the call, the New Covenant brings in special measure what God has said: "My Covenant of Life and Peace shall be with him"; it becomes to him in very deed "the Covenant of an everlasting priesthood." As the Covenant of Levi's priesthood issued and culminated in Christ's, ours issues from that again, and receives from it its blessing to dispense to the world.

To those who desire to know the conditions on which, as part of the New Covenant, the Covenant of an everlasting priesthood can be received and carried out, a study of the conditions on which Levi received the priesthood will be most instructive. We are not only told that God chose that tribe, but what there specially was in that tribe that fitted it for the work. Malachi says: "I gave him My covenant for the fear wherewith he feared Me, and was afraid before My name." The reference is to what took place at Sinai when Israel had made the molten calf. Moses called all who were on the Lord's side, who were ready to avenge the dishonour done to God, to come to him. The tribe of Levi did so, and at his bidding took their swords, and slew three thousand of the idolatrous people (Ex. xxxii. 26-29). In the blessing with which Moses blessed the tribes before his death, their absolute devotion to God, without considering relative or friend, is mentioned as the proof of their fitness for God's service (Deut. xxxiii. 5-11): "Let Thy Thummim and Thy Urim be with Thy holy one, who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not known thee; neither did he acknowledge his own brethren, nor know his own children: for they have observed Thy word and kept Thy covenant."

The same principle is strikingly illustrated in the story of Aaron's grandson, Phineas, where he, in his zeal for God, executed judgment on disobedience to God's command. The words are most suggestive. "And the Lord apake unto Moses, saying, Phineas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, hath turned away My wrath from the children of Israel, in that he was jealous with My jealousy among them, so that I consumed them not in My jealousy. Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him My covenant of peace: and it shall be unto him, and his seed after him, the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was jealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel" (Num. xxv. 10-13). To be jealous with God's jealousy, to be jealous for God's honour, and rise up against sin, is the gate into the Covenant of an everlasting priesthood, is the secret of being entrusted by God with the sacred work of teaching His people, and burning incense before Him, and turning many from iniquity (Deut. xxxiii. 10; Mal. ii. 6).

Even the New Covenant is in danger of being abused by the seeking of our own happiness or holiness, more than the honour of God or the deliverance of men. Even where these are not entirely neglected, they do not always take the place they are meant to have--that first place that makes everything, the dearest and best, secondary and subordinate to the work of helping and blessing men. A reckless disregard of everything that would interfere with God's will and commands, a being jealous with God's jealousy against sin, a witnessing and a fighting against it at any sacrifice --this is the school of training for the priestly office.

It is this the world needs nowadays--men of God in whom the fire of God burns, men who can stand and speak and act in power on behalf of a God who, amid His own people, is dishonoured by the worship of the golden calf. Understand that as you will, of the place given to money and rich men in the church, of the prevalence of worldliness and luxury, or of the more subtle danger of a worship meant for the true God, under forms taken from the Egyptians, and suited to the wisdom and the carnal life of this world. A religion God cannot approve is often found even where the people still profess to be in covenant with God. "Consecrate yourselves to-day unto the Lord, even every man upon his brother." This call of Moses is as much needed to-day as ever. To each one who responds there is the reward of the priesthood.

Let all who would know to the full what the New Covenant means, remember God's Covenant of Life and Peace with Levi. Accept of the holy calling to be an intercessor, and to burn incense before the Lord continually. Love, work, pray, believe, as one whom God has sought and found to stand in the gap before Him. The New Covenant was dedicated by a sacrifice and a death: reckon it your most wonderful privilege, your fullest entrance into its life, as you reflect the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord, to let the Spirit of that sacrifice and death be the moving power in all your priestly functions. Sacrifice yourself, live and die for your fellowmen.

One of the great objects with which God has made a Covenant with us, is, as we have said so often, to waken strong confidence in Himself and His faithfulness to His promise. And one of the objects that He has in wakening and so strengthening the faith in us, is that He may use us as His channels of blessing to the world. In the work of saving men, He wants intercessory prayer to take the first place. He would have us come to Him to receive, from Him in heaven, the spiritual life and power which can pass out from us to them. He knows how difficult and hopeless it is in many cases to deal with sinners; He knows that it is no light thing for us to believe that in answer to our prayer the mighty power of God will move to save those around us; He knows that it needs strong faith to persevere patiently in prayer in cases in which the answer is long delayed, and every year appears farther off than ever. And so He undertakes, in our own experience, to prove what faith in His Divine power can do, in bringing down all the blessings of the New Covenant on ourselves, that we may be able to expect confidently what we ask for others.

In our priestly life there is still another aspect. The priests had no inheritance with their brethren; the Lord God was their inheritance. They had access to His dwelling and His presence, that there they might intercede for others, and thence testify of what God is and wills. Their personal privilege and experience fitted them for their work. If we would intercede in power, do let us live in the full realisation of New Covenant life. It gives us not only liberty and confidence with God, and power to persevere; it gives us power with men, as we can testify to and prove what God has done to us. Herein is the full glory of the New Covenant, that, like Christ, its Mediator, we have the fire of the Divine love dwelling in us, and consuming us in the service of men. May to each of us the chief glory of the New Covenant be that it is the Covenant of an everlasting priesthood.

CHAPTER XVI

The Ministry of the New Covenant

"Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men; being made manifest that ye are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God: not in tables of stone, but in tables that are hearts of flesh. And such confidence have we through Christ Godward: not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to account anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God: who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant; not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth fife."--2 COR. iii. 2-6.

WE have seen that the New Covenant is a ministration of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit ministers all its grace and blessing in Divine power and life. [8] He does this through men, who are called ministers of a New Covenant, ministers of the Spirit. The Divine ministration of the Covenant to men, and the earthly ministry of God's servants, are equally to be in the power of the Holy Spirit. The ministry of the New Covenant has its glory and its fruit in this, that it is all to be a demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

What a contrast this to the Old Covenant. Moses had indeed received of the glory of God shining upon him, but had to put a veil on his face. Israel was incapable of looking on it. In hearing and reading Moses, there was a veil on their hearts. From Moses they might receive knowledge and thoughts and desires,--the power of God's Spirit, to enable them to see the glory of what God speaks, was not yet given. This is the exceeding glory of the New Covenant, that it is a ministration of the Spirit; that its ministers have their sufficiency from God, who makes them ministers of the Spirit, and makes them able so to speak the words of God in the Spirit, that they are written in the heart, and that the hearers become legible, living epistles of Christ, showing the law written in their heart and life.

The ministry of the Spirit! What a glory there is in it! What a responsibility it brings! What a sufficiency of grace there is provided for it! What a privilege, to be a minister of the Spirit!

What tens of thousands we have throughout Christendom who are called ministers of the gospel. What an inconceivable influence they exert for life or for death over the millions who depend upon them for their knowledge and participation of the Christian life. What a power there would be if all these were ministers of the Spirit! Let us study the word, until we see what God meant the ministry to be, and learn to take our part in praying and labouring to have it nothing less.

God hath made us ministers of the Spirit. The first thought is that a minister of the New Covenant must be a man personally possessed of the Holy Spirit. There is a twofold work of the Spirit: one in giving a holy disposition and character, the other in qualifying and empowering a man for work. The former must always come first. The promise of Christ to His disciples, that they should receive the Holy Spirit for their service, was very definitely given to those who had followed and loved Him, and kept His commandments. It is by no means enough that a man have been born of the Spirit. If he is to be a "sufficient minister" of the New Covenant, he must know what it is to be led by the Spirit, to walk in the Spirit, and to say, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Who that wants to learn Greek or Hebrew would accept a professor who hardly knows the elements of these languages? And how can a man be a minister of the New Covenant, which is so entirely "a ministration of the Spirit," a ministration of heavenly life and power, unless he knows by experience what it is to live in the Spirit? The minister must, before everything, be a personal proof and witness of the truth and power of God in the fulfilment of what the New Covenant promises. Ministers are to be picked men; the best specimens and examples of what the Holy Spirit can do to sanctify a man, and by the working of God's power in him to fit him for His service.

God hath made us ministers of the Spirit. Next to this thought, of being personally possessed by the Spirit, comes the truth that all their work in the ministry can be done in the power of the Spirit. What an unspeakably precious assurance--Christ sends them to do a heavenly work, to do His work, to be the instruments in His hands, by which He works: He clothes them with a heavenly power. Their calling is "to preach the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." As far as feelings are concerned, they may have to say as Paul: "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." That does not prevent their adding, nay rather, that may just be the secret of their being able to add: "My preaching was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." If a man is to be a

minister of the New Covenant, a messenger and a teacher of its true blessing, so as to lead God's children to live in it, nothing less will do than a full experience of its power in himself, as the Spirit ministers it. Whether in his feeding on God's word himself, or his seeking in it for God's message for his people, whether in secret or intercessory prayer, whether in private intercourse with souls or public teaching, he is to wait upon, to receive, to yield to the energising of the Holy Spirit, as the mighty power of God working with him. This is his sufficiency for the work. He may every day afresh claim and receive the anointing with fresh oil, the new inbreathing from Christ of His own Spirit and life.

God hath made us ministers of the Spirit. There is something still, of no less importance. The Minister of the Spirit must especially see to it that he lead men to the Holy Spirit. Many will say, If he be led of the Spirit in teaching men, is not that enough? By no means. Men may become too dependent on him; men may take his Scripture teaching at second-hand, and, while there is power and blessing in his ministry, have reason to wonder that the results are not more definitely spiritual and permanent. The reason is simple. The New Covenant is: they shall no longer every man teach his brother, know the Lord, for all shall know Me, from the least even to the greatest. The Father wants every child, from the least, to live in continual personal intercourse with Himself. This cannot be, except as he is taught and helped to know and wait on the Holy Spirit. Bible study and prayer, faith and love and obedience, the whole daily walk must be taught as entirely dependent on the teaching and working of the indwelling Spirit.

The minister of the Spirit, very definitely and perseveringly, points away from himself to the Spirit. This is what John the Baptist did. He was filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth, but sent men away from himself to Christ, to be by Him baptized with the Spirit. Christ did the same. In His farewell discourse He called His disciples to turn from His personal instruction to the inward teaching of the Holy Spirit, who should dwell in them, and guide them into the truth and power of all He had taught them.

There is nothing so needed in the Church to-day. All its feebleness and formalities and worldliness, the lack of holiness, of personal devotion to Christ, of enthusiasm for His cause and kingdom, is owing to one thing--the Holy Spirit is not known and honoured and yielded to, as the one only, as the one all-sufficient source of a holy life. The New Covenant is not known as a ministration of the Spirit in the heart of every believer. The one thing needful for the Church is--the Holy Spirit in His power dwelling and ruling in the lives of God's saints. And as one of the chief means to this there are needed ministers of the Spirit, themselves living in the enjoyment and power of this great gift, who persistently labour to bring their brethren into the possession of their birthright: the Holy Spirit in the heart, maintaining, in Divine power, an unceasing communion with the Son and with the Father. The ministration of the Spirit makes the ministry of the Spirit possible and effectual. And the ministry of the Spirit again makes the ministration of the Spirit an actual experimental reality in the life of the Church.

We know how dependent the Church is on its ministry. The converse is no less true. The ministers are dependent on the Church. They are its children; they breathe its atmosphere; they share its health or sickliness; they are dependent upon its fellowship and intercession. Let none of us think that all that the New Covenant calls us to is to see that we personally accept and rejoice in its blessings. No, indeed; God wants everyone who enters into it to know that its privileges are for all His children, and to give himself to make this known. And there is no more effectual way of doing this than taking thought for the ministry of the Church. Compare the ministry around you with its pattern in God's word (see specially 1 Cor. ii.; 2 Cor. iii.). Join with others who know how the New Covenant is nothing, if it be not a ministration of the Spirit, and cry to God for a spiritual ministry. Ask the leading of God the Holy Ghost to teach you what can be done, what you can do, to have the ministry of your Church become a truly spiritual one. Human condemnation will do as little good as human approbation. It is as the supreme place of the Holy Spirit, as the representative and revealer of the Father and the Son, is made clear to us, that the one desire of our heart, and our continual prayer, will be, that God would so discover to all the ministers of His word their heavenly calling, that they may, above everything, seek this one thing,--to be sufficient ministers of the New Covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit.

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[8] It may be well to read again and compare Chapter VII.: "The New Covenant: a Ministration of the Spirit.")

CHAPTER XVII

His Holy Covenant

"To remember His Holy Covenant; to grant unto us that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, should serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all our days."-LUKE i. 68-75.

WHEN Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, he spoke of God's visiting and redeeming His people, as a remembering of His Holy Covenant. He speaks of what the blessings of that Covenant would be, not in words that had been used before, but in what is manifestly a Divine revelation to him by the Holy Spirit; and gathers up all the former promises in these words: "That we should serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life." Holiness in life and service is to be the great gift of the Covenant of God's Holiness. As we have seen before, the Old Covenant proclaimed and demanded holiness; the New provides it; holiness of heart and life is its great blessing.

There is no attribute of God so difficult to define, so peculiarly a matter of Divine revelation, so mysterious, incomprehensible, and inconceivably glorious, as His Holiness. It is that by which He is specially worshipped in His majesty on the throne of heaven (Isa. vi. 2; Rev. iv. 8, xv. 4). It unites His righteousness, that judges and condemns, with His love, that saves and blesses. As the Holy One He is a consuming fire (Isa. x. 17); as the Holy One He loves to dwell among His people (Isa. xii. 6). As the Holy One He is at an infinite distance from us; as the Holy One He comes inconceivably near, and makes us one with, makes us like Himself. The one purpose of His holy Covenant is to make us holy as He is holy.

As the Holy One He says: "I am holy; be ye holy; I am the Lord which hallow you, which make you holy." The highest conceivable summit of blessedness is our being partakers of the Divine nature, of the Divine holiness.

This is the great blessing Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant, brings. He has been made unto us "both righteousness and sanctification"-- righteousness in order to, as a preparation for, sanctification [9] or holiness. He prayed to the Father: " Sanctify them; for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves may also be sanctified in truth." In Him we are sanctified, saints, holy ones (Rom. i. 7; 1 Cor. i. 2). We have put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and holiness. Holiness is our very nature.

We are holy in Christ. As we believe it, as we receive it, as we yield ourselves to the truth, and draw nigh to God to have the holiness drawn forth and revealed in fellowship with Him, its fountain, we shall know how divinely true it is.

It is for this the Holy Spirit has been given in our hearts. He is the "Spirit of Holiness." His every working is in the power of holiness. Paul says : "God hath chosen us unto salvation, in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." As simple and entire as is our dependence on the word of truth, as the external means, must our confidence be in the hidden power for holiness which the working of the Spirit brings. The connection between God's electing purpose, and the work of the Spirit, with the word we obey, comes out with equal clearness in Peter: "Elect, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience." The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the life of Christ; as we know, and honour, and trust Him, we shall learn and also experience that, in the New Covenant, as the ministration of the Spirit, the sanctification, the holiness of the Holy Spirit is our covenant right. We shall be assured that, as God has promised, so He will work it in us, that we "should serve Him without fear, in righteousness and holiness before Him, all the days of our life." With a treasure of holiness in Christ, and the very Spirit of holiness in our hearts, we can live holy lives. That is, if we believe Him "who worketh in us both to will and to work."

In the light of this Covenant promise, with the Blessed Son and the Holy Spirit to work it out in us, what new meaning is given to the teaching of the New Testament. Take the first epistle St. Paul ever wrote. It was directed to men who had only a few months previously been turned from idols to serve the Living God, and to wait for His Son from heaven. The words he speaks in regard to the holiness they might aim at and expect, because God was going to work it in them, are so grand that many Christians pass them by, as practically unintelligible (1 Thess. iii. 13): "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love, to the end He may stablish your hearts unblamable in holiness at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints." That promises holiness, unblamable holiness, a heart unblamable in holiness, a heart stablished in all this by God Himself. Paul might indeed say of a word like this: "Who hath believed our report?" He had written of himself (ii. 10) : "Ye know how holily and righteously and unblamably we behaved ourselves." He assures them that what God has done for him He will do for them--give them hearts unblameable in holiness.

The Church believes so little in the mighty power of God, and the truth of His Holy Covenant, that the grace of such heart-holiness is hardly spoken of. The verse is often quoted in connection with "the coming of our Lord Jesus with His saints"; but its real point and glory,--that when He comes we may meet Him with hearts stablished unblamable in holiness by God Himself: all too little this is understood or proclaimed or expected.

Or take another verse in the Epistle (v. 21), also spoken to these young converts from heathenism, in reference to the coming of our Lord. Some think that to speak much of the coming of the Lord will make us holy. Alas! how little it has done so in many .cases. It is the New Covenant Holiness, wrought by God Himself in us, believed in and waited for from Him, that can make our waiting differ from the carnal expectations of the Jews or the disciples. Listen-"THE GOD OF PEACE HIMSELF " --that is the keynote of the New Covenant-- what you never can do God will work in you-- "SANCTIFY YOU WHOLLY"; this you may ask and expect,--"and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, UNBLAMABLE, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." And now, as if to meet the doubt that will arise: "Faithful is He that calleth you, WHO WILL ALSO DO IT." Again it is the secret of the New Covenant--what hath not entered into the heart of man,-GOD WILL WORK in them that wait for Him. Until the Church. awakes to see and believe that our holiness is to be the immediate almighty working of the Three-One God in us, and that our whole religion must be an unceasing dependence to receive it direct from Himself, these promises remain a sealed book.

Let us now return to the prophecy of the Holy Spirit by Zacharias, of God's remembering the Covenant of His Holiness, to make us holy, to stablish our hearts unblamable in holiness, that we should serve Him IN HOLINESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS. Note how every word is significant.

To grant us. It is to be a gift from above. The promise given with the Covenant was: " I the Lord have spoken it; I will perform it." We need to beseech God to show us both what He will do, and that He will do it. When our faith expects all from Him, the blessing will be found.

" That we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemaes." He had just before said: He hath raised up an horn of salvation for us; salvation from our enemies and the hand of all that hate us. It is only a free people can serve a Holy God, or be holy. It is only as the teaching of Rom. vi.-viii. is experienced, and I know what it is that we are "freed from sin," and "freed from the law," and that "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death," that in the perfect liberty from every power that could hinder, I can expect God to do His mighty work in me.

Should serve Him. My servant does not serve me by spending all his time in getting himself ready for work, but in doing my work. The Holy Covenant sets us free, and endows us with Divine grace, that God may have us for His work,--the same work Christ began, and we now carry on.

Without fear. In childlike confidence and boldness before God. And before men too. A freedom from fear in every difficulty, because having learnt to know that God works all in us we can trust Him to work all for us and through us.

Before Him. With His continued unceasing presence all the day, as the unceasing security of our obedience and our fearlessness, the neverfailing secret of our being sanctified wholly.

All our days. Not only all the day for one day, but for every day, because Jesus is a High Priest in the power of an endless life, and the mighty operation of God as promised in the Covenant is as unchanging as is God Himself. Is it not as if you begin to see that God's word does appear to mean more than you have ever conceived of or expected? It is well that it should be so. It is only when you begin to say, Glory to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think, and expect God's almighty, supernatural, altogether immeasurable power and grace to work out the New Covenant life in you, and to make you holy, that you will really come to the place of helplessness and dependence where God can work.

I pray you, my Brother, do believe that God's word is true, and say with Zacharias, " Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who bath visited His people, to remember HIS HOLY COVENANT, and to grant us, that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, should serve Him without fear, in holiness rind righteousness before Him, all our days."

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[9] Remember that the words sanctify, sanctity, saint are the same as make holy, holiness, holy one.

CHAPTER XVIII

Entering the Covenant: with all the Heart

"And they entered into the covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart, and all their soul."-- 2 CHRON. xv. 12 (see xxxiv. 31, and 2 Kings xxiii. 3).
"The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul."-- DEUT. xxx. 6.
"And I will give them an heart to know Me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God: for they shall turn to Me with their whole heart."--JER. xxiv. 7 (see xxix. 13).
"I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, with My whole heart and My whole soul." --JER. xxxii. 40.

IN the days of Asa, Hezekiah, and Josiah, we read of Israel entering into "the Covenant" with their whole heart, "to perform the words of the Covenant which are written in the book." Of Asa's day, we read: "They sware unto the Lord; and all Judah rejoiced at the oath, for they had sworn with their whole heart, and sought Him with their whole desire; and He was found of them." Wholeheartedness is the secret of entering the Covenant, and God being found of us in it. Wholeheartedness is the secret of joy in religion --a full entrance into all the blessedness the Covenant brings. God rejoices over His people to do them good, with His whole heart and His whole soul: it needs, on our part, our whole heart and our whole soul to enter into and enjoy this joy of God in doing us good with His whole heart and His whole soul. With what measure we mete, it shall be measured unto us again.

If we have at all understood the teaching of God's word in regard to the New Covenant, we know what it reveals in regard to the two parties who meet in it. On God's side there is the promise to do for us and in us all that we need to serve and enjoy Him. He will rejoice in doing us good, with His whole heart. He will be our God, doing for us all that a God can do, giving Himself as God to be wholly ours. And on our side there is the prospect held out of our being able, in the power of what He engages to do, to "turn to Him with our whole heart," "to love Him with all our heart and all our strength." The first and great commandment, the only possible terms on which God can fully reveal Himself, or give Himself to His creature to enjoy, is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." That law is unchangeable. The New Covenant comes and brings us the grace to obey, by lifting us into the love of God as the air we breathe, and enabling us, in the faith of that grace, to rise and be of good courage, and with our whole heart to yield ourselves to the God of the Covenant, and the life in His service.

Wholeheartedness in the love and the service of God! how shall I speak of it? Of its imperative necessity? It is the one unalterable condition of true communion with God, of which nothing can supply the want. Of its infinite reasonableness? With such a God, a very Fountain of all that is loving and lovely, of all that is good and blessed, the All-glorious God: surely there cannot for a moment be a thought of anything else being His due, or of our consenting to offer Him anything less, than the love of the whole heart. Of its unspeakable blessedness? To love Him with the whole heart, this is the only possible way of receiving His great love into our heart and rejoicing in it--yielding oneself to that mighty love, and allowing God Himself, just as an earthly love enters into us and makes us glad, to give us the taste and the joy of the heavenliness of that love. Of its terrible lack? Yes, what shall I speak of this ? Where find words to open the eyes and reach the heart, and show how almost universal is the lack of true wholeheartedness in the faith and love of God, in the desire to love Him with the whole heart, in the sacrifice of everything to possess Him, to please Him, to be wholly possessed of Him? And then of the blessed certainty of its attainableness? The Covenant has provided for it. The Triune God will work it by taking possession of the heart, and dwelling there. The Blessed Mediator of the Covenant undertakes for all we have to do. His constraining love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit can bring it and maintain it. Yes, I ask how shall I speak of all this?

Have we not spoken enough of it already in this book? Do we not need something more than words and thoughts? Is not what we need rather this--quietly to turn to the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, and in the faith of the light and the strength our Lord gives through Him, accept and act out what God tells us of the God-given heart He has placed within us, the God-wrought

wholeheartedness He works? Surely the new heart which has been given us to love God with, with God's Spirit in it, is wholly for God. Let our faith accept and rejoice in the wondrous gift, and not fear to say: I will love Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart. Just think for a moment of what it means that God has given us such a heart.

We know what God's giving means. His giving depends on our taking. He does not force upon us spiritual possessions. He promises, and gives, in such measure as desire and faith are ready to receive. He gives in Divine power; as faith yields itself to that power, and accepts the gift, it becomes consciously and experimentally our possession.

As spiritual gifts God's bestowings are not recognised by sense or reason. "Ear hath not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit. We have received the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given us of God." It is as you yield yourself to be led and taught by the Spirit, that your faith will be able, despite of all lack of feeling, to rejoice in the possession of the new heart, and all that is given with it.

Then, this Divine giving is continuous. I bestow a gift on a man; he takes it, and I never see him again. So God bestows temporal gifts on men, and they never think of Him. But spiritual gifts are only to be received and enjoyed in unceasing communication with God Himself. The new heart is not a power I have in myself, like the natural endowments of thinking or loving. No, it is only in unceasing dependence upon, in close contact with God, that the heavenly gift of a new heart can be maintained uninjured, can day by day become stronger. It is only in God's immediate presence, in unbroken direct dependence on Him, that spiritual endowments are preserved.

Then, further, spiritual gifts can only be enjoyed by acting them out in faith. None of the graces of the Christian life, like love, or meekness, or boldness, can be felt or known, much less strengthened, until we begin to exercise them, We must not wait to feel them, or to feel the strength for them; we must, in the obedience of the faith that they are given us, and hidden within us, practise them. Whatever we read of the new heart, and of all God has given into it in the New Covenant, must be boldly believed and carried out into action.

All this is especially true of wholeheartedness, and loving God with all our heart. You may at first be very ignorant of all it implies. God has planted the new heart in the midst of the flesh, which, with its animating principle, SELF, has to be denied, to be kept crucified, and by the Holy Spirit to be mortified. God has placed you in the midst of a world, from which, with all that is of it and its spirit, you are to come out and be entirely separate. God has given you your work in His kingdom, for which He asks all your interest, and time, and strength. In all these three respects you need wholeheartedness, to enable you to make the sacrifices that may be required. If you take the ordinary standard of Christian life around you, you will find that wholeheartedness, intense devotion to God and His service, is hardly thought of. How to make the best of both worlds, innocently to enjoy as much as possible of this present life, is the ruling principle, and, as a natural consequence, the present world secures the larger share of interest. To please self is considered legitimate, and the Christlike life of not pleasing self has little place. Wholeheartedness will lead you, and. enable you too, to accept Christ's command and sell all for the pearl of great price. Though at first afraid of what it may involve, do not hesitate to speak the word frequently in the ear of your Father: with my whole heart. You may count on the Holy Spirit to open up its meaning, to show you to what service or what sacrifice God calls you in it, to increase its power, to reveal its blessedness, to make it the very spirit of your life of devotion to your Covenant God.

And now, who is ready to enter into this New and Everlasting Covenant with his whole heart? Let each of us do it.

Begin by asking God very humbly to give you by the Spirit, who dwells in you, the vision of the heavenly life of wholehearted love and obedience, as it has actually been prepared for you in Christ. It is an existing reality, a spiritual endowment out of the life of God which can come upon you. It is secured to you in the Covenant, and in Christ Jesus, its Surety. Ask earnestly, definitely, believingly, that God reveal this to you. Rest not till you know fully what your Father means you to be, and has provided for your most certainly being.

When you begin to see why the New Covenant was given, and what it promises, and how divinely certain its promises are, offer yourself to God unreservedly to be taken up into, it. Offer, if He will take you in, to love Him with your whole heart, and to obey Him with all your strength. Hold not back, be not afraid. God has sworn to do you good with His whole heart: do say, do not hesitate to say, that into this Covenant, in which He promises to cause you to turn to Him and to love Him with your whole heart, you now with your whole heart enter. If there be any fear, just ask again and believingly for a vision of the Covenant life: God swearing to do you good with His whole heart; God undertaking to make and enable you to love and obey Him with your whole heart. The vision of this life will make you bold to say: Into this Covenant of a wholehearted love in God and in me I do with my whole heart now enter:

here will I dwell.

Let us close and part with this one thought. A redeeming God, rejoicing with His whole heart and whole soul to do us good, and to work in us all that is well-pleasing in His sight: this is the one side. Such is the God of the Covenant. Gaze upon Him. Believe Him. Worship Him. Wait upon Him, until the fire begin to burn, and your heart be drawn out with all its might to love this God. Then the other side. A redeemed soul, rejoicing with all its heart and all its soul in the love of this God, entering into the covenant of wholehearted love, and venturing, ere it knows, to say to Him: With my whole heart I do love Thee, God, my exceeding joy. Such are the children of the Covenant.

Beloved reader! rest not till you have entered in, through the Gate Beautiful, through Christ the door, into this temple of the love, of the heart, of God.

NOTE F. -- CHAP. XVIII

The Whole Heart

LET me give the principal passages in which the words "the whole heart," "all the heart," are used. A careful study of them will show how wholehearted love and service is what God has always asked, because He can, in the very nature of things, ask nothing less. The prayerful and believing acceptance of the words will waken the assurance that such wholehearted love and service is exactly the blessing the New Covenant was meant to make possible. That assurance will prepare us for turning to the Omnipotence of God to work in us what may have hitherto appeared beyond our reach.

Hear, first, God's word in Deuteronomy--
iv. 29: "If thou seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find Him, if thou seek Him with all thy heart and all thy soul."
vi. 4, 5: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."
x. 12: "What doth the Lord thy God require of thee but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve Him with all thy heart and all thy soul."
xi. 13: "Hearken diligently unto My commandments, to love the Lord your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul."
xiii. 3: "The Lord your God proveth you, whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul."
xxvi. 16 : "Thou shalt therefore keep these statutes and do them with all thy heart and all thy soul."
xxx. 2: "Thou shalt obey His voice with all thine heart and with all soul."
xxx. 6: "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul" (see also v. 9, 10).

Take these oft-repeated words as the expression of God's will concerning His people, and concerning yourself; ask if you could wish to give God anything less. Take the last-cited verse as the Divine promise of the New Covenant--that He will circumcise, will so cleanse the heart to love Him with a wholehearted love, that obedience is within your reach; and say whether you will not vow afresh to keep this His first and great commandment.

Listen to Joshua (xxii. 5): "Take diligent heed to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments, and to cleave unto Him, and to serve Him, with all your heart and with all your soul."

Listen to Samuel (1 Sam. xii. 20, 24): "Turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart. Only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart."

Hear David repeating God's promise to Solomon (1 Kings ii. 4) "If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and all their soul."

Hear God's word concerning David (1 Kings xiv. 8): "My servant David, who followed Me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in Mine eyes."

Hear Solomon in his temple prayer (1 Kings viii. 48): "If they return to Thee with all their heart and all their soul, hear Thou their prayer."

Listen to what is said of Jehu (2 Kings x. 31): "The Lord said unto Jehu, Thou hast done well in executing that which is right in Mine eyes. But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord with all his heart."

Of Josiah we read (2 Kings xxiii. 3, 25): "The king and all the men of Judah made a covenant with the Lord, to walk after the Lord, with all their heart and with all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. There was no king like him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and all his soul, and all his might."

The words concerning Asa, in 2 Chron. xv. 12, 15, we had as our text.

Of Jehoshaphat, men said (2 Chron. xxii. 9): "He sought the Lord with all his heart."

And of Hezekiah it is written (2 Chron. xxxi. 21) : "In every work that he began, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart and prospered."

Oh that all would ask God to give them, by the Holy Spirit, a simple vision of Himself!--claiming, giving, accepting, blessing, delighting in, the love and service of the whole heart--the sacrifice of the whole burnt-offering. Surely they would fall down and join the ranks of those who have given it; and refuse to think of anything as religious life, or worship, or service, but that in which their whole heart went out to God. Turn to the Psalms. Hear David (ix. 1, cxi. 1, cxxxviii. 1): "I will praise Thee with my whole heart." And in Psalm cxix., the Psalm of the way of blessedness: "Blessed who seek Him with the whole heart. With my whole heart have I sought Thee. I shall keep Thy law, yea I shall observe it with my whole heart. I entreated Thy favour with my whole heart. I will keep Thy precepts with my whole heart. I cried with my whole heart." Praise and prayer; seeking God and keeping His precepts; all equally with the whole heart.

Shall we not begin asking more earnestly than ever, as often as we see men engaged in their earthly pursuits in search of money, or pleasure, or fame, or power, with their whole heart. Is this the spirit in which Christians consider that God must be served? Is this the spirit in which I serve Him? Is not this the one thing needful in our religion? Lord, reveal unto us Thy will!

Now, just a few words more from the Prophets about the new time, the great change that can come into our lives.

Jer. xxiv. 7 : "I will give them an heart to know Me that I am the Lord; and they shall be My people and I will be their God; for they shall return to Me with their whole heart."

xxix. 13: " Ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord."

xxxii. 39-41.--Let my reader not be weary of reading carefully these Divine words: they contain the secret, the seed, the living power of a complete transition out of a life in the bondage of half-hearted service, to the glorious liberty of the children of God.--"I will give them one heart, that they may fear Me for ever. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good ; but I will put my fear in their heart, that they shall not depart from Me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, with My whole heart and My whole Soul!"

It is to be all God's doing. And He is to do it with His whole heart and His whole soul. It is the vision of this God with His whole heart loving us, longing and delighting to fulfil His promise, and make us wholly His own, that we need. This vision makes it impossible not to love Him with our whole heart. Lord, open our eyes that we may see!

Joel ii. 12: "Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to Me with all your heart."

Zeph. iii. 14" "Shout, O Israel; BE GLAD AND REJOICE WITH ALL THE HEART; The Lord hath taken away thy judgments. HE HATH CAST OUT THINE ENEMY; THE KING OF ISRAEL, THE LORD, IS IN THE MIDST OF THEE; THOU SHALT NOT SEE EVIL ANY MORE."

Now one word from our Lord Jesus (Matt. xxii. 37): "Jesus said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." This is the first and great commandment. This is the sum of that law He came to fulfil for us and in us, came to enable us to fulfil. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk after the Spirit."

Praise God! this righteousness of the law--loving God with all the heart, for love is the fulfilling of the law--this righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk after the Spirit. Jesus came to make it possible. He gives His Spirit--the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus--to make it actual. Let us not fear to give ourselves a whole burnt offering, acceptable to God; loving Him with all our heart and mind and strength.

May I ask the reader just once again to peruse Chapter VI., on "The Everlasting Covenant," and Chapter XVIII., on "Entering into the Covenant with the Whole Heart." And say then, if you have never yet entered fully into this covenant of the whole heart, whether you are not ready to do it now. God demands, God works, God is, oh, so infinitely worthy of, the whole heart! Fear not to say He shall have it. You may confidently count upon the blessed Lord Jesus, the Surety of the Covenant, whose it is to make it true in you by His Spirit, to enable you to exercise the faith that knows that God's power will work what He has promised. In His Name say: With my whole heart I do love Thee!

THE DEEPER CHRISTIAN LIFE

AN AID TO ITS ATTAINMENT

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I. DAILY FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

1. The first and chief need of our Christian life is, Fellowship with God.

The Divine life within us comes from God, and is entirely dependent upon Him. As I need every moment afresh the air to breathe, as the s sun every moment afresh sends down its light, so it is only in direct living communication with God that my soul can be strong.

The manna of one day was corrupt when the next day came. I must every day have fresh grace from heaven, and I obtain it only in direct waiting upon God Himself. Begin each day by tarrying before God, and letting Him touch you. Take time to meet God.

2. To this end, let your first act in your devotion be a setting yourself still before God. In prayer, or worship, everything depends upon God taking the chief place. I must bow quietly before Him in humble faith and adoration, speaking thus within my heart: "God is. God is near. God is love, longing to communicate Himself to me. God the Almighty One, Who worketh all in all, is even now waiting to work in me, and make Himself known." Take time, till you know God is very near.

3. When you have given God His place of honor, glory, and power, take your place of deepest lowliness, and seek to be filled with the Spirit of humility. As a creature it is your blessedness to be nothing, that God may be all in you. As a sinner you are not worthy to look up to God; bow in self abasement. As a saint, let God's love overwhelm you, and bow you still lower down. Sink down before Him in humility, meekness, patience, and surrender to His goodness and mercy. He will exalt you. Oh! take time, to get very low before God.

4. Then accept and value your place in Christ Jesus. God delights in nothing but His beloved Son, and can be satisfied with nothing else in those who draw nigh to Him. Enter deep into God's holy presence in the boldness which the blood gives, and in the assurance that in Christ you are most well-pleasing. In Christ you are within the veil. You have access into the very heart and love of the Father. This is the great object of fellowship with God, that I may have more of God in my life, and that God may see Christ formed in me. Be silent before God and let Him bless you.

5. This Christ is a living Person. He loves you with a personal love, and He looks every day for the personal response of your love. Look into His face with trust, till His love really shines into your heart. Make His heart glad by telling Him that you do love Him. He offers Himself to you as a personal Saviour and Keeper from the power of sin. Do not ask, can I be kept from sinning, if I keep close to Him? but ask, can I be kept from sinning, if He always keeps close to me? and you see at once how safe it is to trust Him.

6. We have not only Christ's life in us as a power, and His presence with us as a person, but we have His likeness to be wrought into us. He is to be formed in us, so that His form or figure, His likeness, can be seen in us. Bow before God until you get some sense of the greatness and blessedness of the work to be carried on by God in you this day. Say to God, "Father, here am I for Thee to give as much in me of Christ's likeness as I can receive." And wait to hear Him say, "My child, I give thee as much of Christ as thy heart is open to receive." The God who revealed Jesus in the flesh and perfected Him, will reveal Him in thee and perfect thee in Him. The Father loves the Son, and delights to work out His image and likeness in thee. Count upon it that this blessed work will be done in thee as thou waitest on thy God, and holdest fellowship with Him.

7. The likeness to Christ consists chiefly in two things--the likeness of His death and resurrection, (Rom. 6:5). The death of Christ was the consummation of His humility and obedience, the entire giving up of His life to God. In Him we are dead to sin. As we sink down in humility and dependence and entire surrender to God, the power of His death works in us, and we are made conformable to His death. And so we know Him in the power of His resurrection, in the victory over sin, and all the joy and power of the risen life. Therefore every morning, "present yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead." He will maintain the life He gave, and bestow the grace to live as risen ones.

8. All this can only be in the power of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in you. Count upon Him to glorify Christ in you. Count upon Christ to increase in you the inflowing of His Spirit. As you wait before God to realize His presence, remember that the Spirit is in you to reveal the things of God. Seek in God's presence to have the anointing of the Spirit of Christ so truly that your whole life may every moment be spiritual.

9. As you meditate on this wondrous salvation and seek full fellowship with the great and holy God, and wait on Him to reveal Christ in you, you will feel how needful the giving up of all is to receive Him. Seek grace to know what it means to live as wholly for God as Christ did. Only the Holy Spirit Himself can teach you what an entire yielding of the whole life to God can mean. Wait on God to show you in this what you do not know. Let every approach to God, and every request for fellowship with Him be accompanied by a new, very definite, and entire surrender to Him to work in you.

10. "By faith" must here, as through all Scripture, and all the spiritual life, be the keynote. As you tarry before God, let it be in a deep quiet faith in Him, the Invisible One, who is so near, so holy, so mighty, so loving. In a deep, restful faith too, that all the blessings and powers of the heavenly life are around you, and in you. Just yield yourself in the faith of a perfect trust to the Ever Blessed Holy Trinity to work out all God's purpose in you. Begin each day thus in fellowship with God, and God will be all in all to you.

II. PRIVILEGE AND EXPERIENCE

"And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and
all that I have is thine." --Luke 15:31.

The words of the text are familiar to us all. The elder son had complained and said, that though his father had made a feast, and had killed the fatted calf for the prodigal son, he had never given him even a kid that he might make merry with his friends. The answer of the father was: "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." One cannot have a more wonderful revelation of the heart of our Father in heaven than this points out to us. We often speak of the wonderful revelation of the father's heart in his welcome to the prodigal son, and in what he did for him. But here we have a revelation of the father's love far more wonderful, in what he says to the elder son.

If we are to experience a deepening of spiritual life, we want to discover clearly what is the spiritual life that God would have us live, on the one hand; and, on the other, to ask whether we are living that life; or, if not, what hinders us living it out fully.

This subject naturally divides itself into these three heads:--I. The high privilege of every child of God. 2. The low experience of too many of us believers. 3. The cause of the discrepancy; and, lastly, The way to the restoration of the privilege.

1. THE HIGH PRIVILEGE OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

We have here two things describing the privilege:--First, "Son, thou art ever with me"--unbroken fellowship with thy Father is thy portion; Second, "All that I have is thine"--all that God can bestow upon His children is theirs.

"Thou are ever with me;" I am always near thee; thou canst dwell every hour of thy life in My presence, and all I have is for thee. I am a father, with a loving father's heart. I will withhold no good thing from thee. In these promises, we have the rich privilege of God's heritage. We have, in the first place, unbroken fellowship with Him. A father never sends his child away with the thought that he does not care about his child knowing that he loves him. The father longs to have his child believe that he has the light of his father's countenance upon him all the day--that, if he sends the child away to school, or anywhere that necessity compels, it is with a sense of sacrifice of parental feelings. If it be so with an earthly father, what think you of God? Does He not want every child of His to know that he is constantly living in the light of His countenance? This is the meaning of that word, "Son, thou art ever with me."

That was the privilege of God's people in Old Testament times. We are told that "Enoch walked with God." God's promise to Jacob was: "Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." And God's promise to Israel through Moses, was: "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." And in Moses' response to the promise, he says, "For wherein shall it be known that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? Is it not that Thou goest with us; so shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth." The presence of God with Israel was the mark of their separation from other people. This is the truth taught in all the Old Testament; and if so, how much more may we look for it in the New Testament? Thus we find our Saviour promising to those who love Him and who keep His word, that the Father also will love them, and Father and Son will come and make Their abode with them.

Let that thought into your hearts--that the child of God is called to this blessed privilege, to live every moment of his life in fellowship with God. He is called to enjoy the full light of His countenance. There are many Christians--I suppose the majority of Christians--who seem to regard the whole of the Spirit's work as confined to conviction and conversion:--not so much that He came to dwell in our hearts, and there reveal God to us. He came not to dwell near us, but in us, that we might be filled with His indwelling. We are commanded to be "filled with the Spirit;" then the Holy Spirit would make God's presence manifest to us. That is the whole teaching of the epistle to the Hebrews:--the veil is rent in twain; we have access into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus; we come into the very presence of God, so that we can live all the day with that presence resting upon us. That presence is with us wheresoever we go; and in all kinds of trouble, we have undisturbed repose and peace. "Son, thou art ever with me."

There are some people who seem to think that God, by some unintelligible sovereignty, withdraws His face. But I know that God loves His people too much to withhold His fellowship from them for any such reason. The true reason of the absence of God from us is rather to be found in our sin and unbelief, than in any supposed sovereignty of His. If the child of God is walking in faith and obedience, the Divine presence will be enjoyed in unbroken continuity.

Then there is the next blessed privilege: "All that I have is thine." Thank God, He has given us His own Son; and in giving Him, He has given us all things that are in Him, He has given us Christ's life, His love, His Spirit, His glory. "All things are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." All the riches of His Son, the everlasting King, God bestows upon every one of His children. "Son, thou art ever with me; and all that I have is thine." Is not that the meaning of all those wonderful promises given in connection with prayer: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, ye shall receive."? Yes, there it is. That is the life of the children of God, as He Himself has pictured it to us.

2. In contrast with this high privilege of believers, look at

2. THE LOW EXPERIENCE OF TOO MANY OF US.

The elder son was living with his father and serving him "these many years," and he complains that his father never gave him a kid, while he gave his prodigal brother the fatted calf. Why was this? Simply because he did not ask it. He did not believe that he would get it, and therefore never asked it, and never enjoyed it. He continued thus to live in constant murmuring and dissatisfaction; and the key note of all this wretched life is furnished in what he said. His father gave him everything, yet he never enjoyed it; and he throws the whole blame on his loving and kind father. O beloved, is not that the life of many a believer? Do not many speak and act in this way? Every believer has the promise of unbroken fellowship with God, but he says, "I have not enjoyed it; I have tried hard and done my best, and I have prayed for the blessing, but I suppose God does not see fit to grant it." But why not? One says, it is the sovereignty of God withholding the blessing. The father withheld not his gifts from the elder brother in sovereignty; neither does our Heavenly Father withhold any good thing from them that love Him. He does not make any such differences between His children. "He is able to make all grace abound towards you" was the promise equally made to all in the Corinthian church.

Some think these rich blessings are not for them, but for those who have more time to devote to religion and prayer; or their circumstances are so difficult, so peculiar, that we can have no conception of their various hindrances. But do not such think that God, if He places them in these circumstances, cannot make His grace abound accordingly? They admit He could if He would, work a miracle for them, which they can hardly expect. In some way, they, like the elder son, throw the blame on God. Thus many are saying, when asked if they are enjoying unbroken fellowship with God:--"Alas, no! I have not been able to attain to such a height; it is too high

for me. I know of some who have it, and I read of it; but God has not given it to me, for some reason." But why not? You think, perhaps, that you have not the same capacity for spiritual blessing that others have. The Bible speaks of a joy that is "unspeakable and full of glory" as the fruit of believing; of a "love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us." Do we desire it, do we? Why not get it? Have we asked for it? We think we are not worthy of the blessing--we are not good enough; and therefore God has not given it. There are more among us than we know of, or are willing to admit, who throw the blame of our darkness, and of our wanderings on God! Take care! Take care! Take care!

And again, what about that other promise? The Father says, "All I have is thine." Are you rejoicing in the treasures of Christ? Are you conscious of having an abundant supply for all your spiritual needs every day? God has all these for you in abundance. "Thou never gavest me a kid!" The answer is, "All that I have is thine. I gave it thee in Christ."

Dear reader, we have such wrong thoughts of God. What is God like? I know no image more beautiful and instructive than that of the sun. The sun is never weary of shining;--of pouring out his beneficent rays upon both the good and the evil. You might close up the windows with blinds or bricks, the sun would shine upon them all the same; though we might sit in darkness, in utter darkness, the shining would be just the same. God's sun shines on every leaf; on every flower; on every blade of grass; on everything that springs out of the ground. All receive this wealth of sunshine until they grow to perfection and bear fruit. Would He who made that sun be less willing to poor out His love and life into me? The sun--what beauty it creates! And my God,--would He not delight more in creating a beauty and a fruitfulness in me?--such, too, as He has promised to give? And yet some say, when asked why they do not live in unbroken communion with God, "God does not give it to me, I do not know why; but that is the only reason I can give you--He has not given it to me." You remember the parable of the one who said, "I know thou art an hard master, reaping where thou hast not sown and gathering where thou hast not strawed," asking and demanding what thou hast not given. Oh! let us come and ask why it is that the believer lives such a low experience.

3. THE CAUSE OF THIS DISCREPANCY BETWEEN GOD'S GIFTS, AND OUR LOW EXPERIENCE.

The believer is complaining that God has never given him a kid. Or, God has given him some blessing, but has never given the full blessing. He has never filled him with His Spirit. "I never," he says, "had my heart, as a fountain, giving forth the rivers of living water promised in John vii. 38." What is the cause? The elder son thought he was serving his father faithfully "these many years" in his father's house, but it was in the spirit of bondage and not in the spirit of a child, so that his unbelief blinded him to the conception of a father's love and kindness, and he was unable all the time to see that his father was ready, not only to give him a kid, but a hundred, or a thousand kids, if he would have them. He was simply living in unbelief, in ignorance, in blindness, robbing himself of the privileges that the father had for him. So, if there be a discrepancy between our life and the fulfillment and enjoyment of all God's promises, the fault is ours. It our experience be not what God wants it to be, it is because of our unbelief in the love of God, in the power of God, and in the reality of God's promises.

God's word teaches us, in the story of the Israelites, that it was unbelief on their part that was the cause of their troubles, and not any limitation or restriction on God's part. As Psalm 78th says:--"He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths. He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers." Yet they sinned by doubting His power to provide meat for them--"They spake against God; they said, can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" (vs. 15-19). Later on, we read in v. 41, "They turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel." They kept distrusting Him from time to time. When they got to Kadesh-Barnea, and God told them to enter the land flowing with milk and honey where there would be rest, abundance, and victory, only two men said, "Yes;" we can take possession, for God can make us

conquer." But the ten spies, and the six hundred thousand men answered, "No; we can never take the land; the enemies are too strong for us." It was simply unbelief that kept them out of the land of promise.

If there is to be any deepening of the spiritual life in us, we must come to the discovery, and the acknowledgment of the unbelief there is in our hearts. God grant that we may get this spiritual quickening, and that we may come to see that it is by our unbelief that we have prevented God from doing His work in us. Unbelief is the mother of disobedience, and of all my sins and short comings--my temper, my pride, my unlovingness, my worldliness, my sins of every kind. Though these differ in nature and form, yet they all come from the one root, viz, that we do not believe in the freedom and fulness of the Divine gift of the Holy Spirit to dwell in us and strengthen us, and fill us with the life and grace of God all the day long. Look, I pray you, at that elder son, and ask what was the cause of that terrible difference between the heart of the father and the experience of the son. There can be no answer but that it was this sinful unbelief that utterly blinded the son to a sense of his father's love.

Dear fellow believer, I want to say to you, that, if you are not living in the joy of God's salvation, the entire cause is your unbelief. You do not believe in the mighty power of God, and that He is willing by His Holy Spirit to work a thorough change in your life, and enable you to live in fulness of consecration to Him. God is willing that you should so live; but you do not believe it. If men really believed in the infinite love of God, what a change it would bring about! What is love? It is a desire to communicate oneself for the good of the object loved--the opposite to selfishness; as we read in 1 Cor. xiii. "Love seeketh not her own." Thus the mother is willing to sacrifice herself for the good of her child. So God in His love is ever willing to impart blessing; and He is omnipotent in His love. This is true, my friends; God is omnipotent in love, and He is doing His utmost to fill every heart in this house. "But if God is really anxious to do that, and if He is Almighty, why does He not do it now?" You must remember, that God has given you a will, and by the exercise of that will, you can hinder God, and remain content, like the elder son, with the low life of unbelief. Come, now, and let us see the cause of the difference between God's high, blessed provision for His children, and the low, sad experience of many of us in the unbelief that distrusts and grieves Him.

4. THE WAY OF RESTORATION--HOW IS THAT TO BE BROUGHT ABOUT?

We all know the parable of the prodigal son; and how many sermons have been preached about repentance, from that parable. We are told that "he came to himself and said, I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight." In preaching, we speak of this as the first step in a changed life--as conversion, as repentance, confession, returning to God. But, as this is the first step for the prodigal, we must remember that this is also the step to be taken by His erring children--by all the ninety-nine "who need no repentance," or think they do not. Those Christians who do not understand how wrong their low religious life is, must be taught that this is sin--unbelief; and that it is as necessary that they should be brought to repentance as the prodigal. You have heard a great deal of preaching repentance to the unconverted; but I want to try to preach it to God's children. We have a picture of so many of God's children in that elder brother. What the father told him, to bring about a consideration of the love that He bore him, just as he loved the prodigal brother, thus does God tell to us in our contentedness with such a low life:--"You must repent and believe that I love you, and all that I have is thine." He says, "By your unbelief, you have dishonoured me, living for ten, twenty, or thirty years, and never believing what it was to live in the blessedness of My love. You must confess the wrong you have done Me in this, and be broken down in contrition of heart just as truly as the prodigal."

There are many children of God who need to confess, that though they are His children, they have never believed that God's promises are true, that He is willing to fill their hearts all the day long with His blessed presence. Have you believed this? If you have not, all our teaching will be of no profit to you. Will you not say, "By the help of God, I will begin now a new life of faith, and will not rest until I know what such a life means. I will believe that I

am every moment in the Father's presence, and all that He has is mine?"

May the Lord God work this conviction in the hearts of all cold believers. Have you ever heard the expression, "a conviction for sanctification?" You know, the unconverted man needs a conviction before conversion. So does the dark-minded Christian need conviction before, and in order to sanctification, before he comes to a real insight to spiritual blessedness. He must be convicted a second time because of his sinful life of doubt, and temper, and unlovingness. He must be broken down under that conviction; then there is hope for him. May the Father of mercy grant all such that deep contrition, so that they may be led into the blessedness of His presence, and enjoy the fulness of His power and love!

III. CARNAL OR SPIRITUAL?

"And Peter went out and wept bitterly." --Luke 22:62.

These words indicate the turning point in the life of Peter,--a crisis. There is often a question about the life of holiness. Do you grow into it? or do you come into it be a crisis suddenly? Peter has been growing for three years under the training of Christ, but he had grown terribly downward, for the end of his growing was, he denied Jesus. And then there came a crisis. After the crisis he was a changed man, and then he began to grow aright. We must indeed grow in grace, but before we can grow in grace we must be put right.

You know what the two halves of the life of Peter were. In God's Word we read very often about the difference between the carnal and the spiritual Christian. The word "carnal" comes from the Latin word for flesh. In Romans viii, and in Gal. v., we are taught that the flesh and the Spirit of God are the two opposing powers by which we are dominated or ruled, and we are taught that a true believer may allow himself to be ruled by the flesh. That is what Paul writes to the Corinthians. In the 3rd chapter, the first four verses, he says, four times to them, "You are carnal, and not spiritual." And just so a believer can allow the flesh to have so much power over him that becomes "carnal." Every object is named according to its most prominent characteristic. If a man is a babe in Christ and has a little of the Holy Spirit and a great deal of the flesh, he is called carnal, for the flesh is his chief mark. If he gives way, as the Corinthians did, to strife, temper, division, and envy, he is a carnal Christian. He is a Christian, but a carnal one. But if he gives himself over entirely to the Holy Spirit so that He (the Holy Spirit) can deliver from the temper, the envy, and the strife, by breathing a heavenly disposition; and can mortify the deeds of the body; then God's Word calls him a "spiritual" man, a true spiritual Christian.

Now, these two styles are remarkably illustrated in the life of Peter. The text is the crisis and turning point at which he begins to pass over from the one side to the other.

The message that I want to bring to you is this: That the great majority of Christians, alas, are not spiritual men, and that they may become spiritual men by the grace of God. I want to come to all who are perhaps hungering and longing for the better life, and asking what is wrong that you are without it, to point out that what is wrong is just one thing,--allowing the flesh to rule in you, and trusting in the power of the flesh to make you good.

There is a better life, a life in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Then, I want to tell you a third thing. The first thing is important, take care of the carnal life, and confess if you are in it. The second truth is very blessed, there is a spiritual life; believe that it is a possibility. But the third truth is the most important,--You can be one step get out of the carnal into the spiritual state. May God reveal it to you now through the story of the Apostle Peter!

Look at him, first of all, in the carnal state. What are the marks of the carnal state in him? Self-will, self-pleasing, self-confidence. Just remember, when Christ said to the disciples at Caesarea Philippi, "The Son of Man must be crucified," Peter said to Him, "Lord, that can never be!" And Christ had to say to him, "Get thee behind Me, Satan!" Dear reader, what an awful thing for Peter! He could not understand what a suffering Christ was. And Peter was so self-willed and self-confident that he dared to contradict and to rebuke Christ! Just think of it! Then, you remember, how Peter and the other disciples, were more than once quarreling as to who was to be the chief--self-exaltation, self-pleasing;--every one wanted the chief seat in the Kingdom of God. Then again, remember the last night, when Christ warned Peter that Satan had desired to sift him and that he would deny Him; and Peter said

twice over, "Lord, if they all deny Thee, I am ready to go to prison and to death." What self-confidence! He was sure that his heart was right. He loved Jesus, but he trusted himself. "I will never deny my Lord.! Don't you see the whole of that life of Peter is carnal confidence in himself. In his carnal pride, in his carnal unlovingness, in the carnal liberty he took in contradicting Jesus, it was all just the life of the flesh. Peter loved Jesus. God had by the Holy Spirit, taught him. Christ had said, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." God had taught him that Christ was the Son of God; but with all that, Peter was just under the power of the flesh; and that is why Christ said at Gethsemane, "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak."--"You are under the power of the flesh, you cannot watch with Me." Dear reader, what did it all lead to? The flesh led not only to the sins I have mentioned, but last of all to the saddest of things, to Peter's actual denial of Jesus. Three times over he told the lie; and once with an oath, "I know not the man." He denied his blessed Lord. That is what it comes to with the life of the flesh. That is Peter.

Now, look in the second place at Peter after he became a spiritual man. Christ had taught Peter a great deal. I think, if you count carefully, you will find some seven or eight times, Christ had spoken to the disciples about humility; He had taken a little child and set him in the midst of them; He had said, "He that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted; He had said that three or four times; He had at the last supper washed their feet; but all had not taught Peter humility. All Christ's instructions were in vain. Remember that now. A man who is not spiritual, though he may read his Bible, though he may study God's Word, cannot conquer sin, because he is not living the life of the Holy Spirit. God has so ordered it, that man cannot live a right Christian life unless he is full of the Holy Ghost. Do you wonder at what I say? Have you been accustomed to think,--"Full of the Holy Ghost, that is what the Apostles had to be on the day of Pentecost; that is what the martyrs and the ministers had to be; but for every man to be full of the Holy Ghost, that is too high"? I tell you solemnly, unless you believe that, you will never become thorough-going Christians. I must be full of the Holy Spirit if I am to be a whole-hearted Christian.

Then, note what change took place in Peter. The Lord Jesus led him up to Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came from heaven upon him, and what took place? The old Peter was gone, and he was a new Peter. Just read his epistle, and note the keynote of the epistle. "Through suffering to glory." Peter, who had said, "Of course, Lord, you never can suffer, or be crucified;" Peter, who, to save himself suffering or shame, had denied Christ,--Peter becomes so changed that when he writes his epistle the chief thought is the very thought of Christ, "Suffering is the way to glory." Do you not see that the Holy Spirit had changed Peter?

And look at other aspects. Look at Peter. He was so weak that a woman could frighten him into denying Christ; but when the Holy Spirit came he was bold, bold, bold to confess his Lord at any cost, was ready to go to prison and to death, for Christ's sake. The Holy Spirit had changed the man. Look at his views of Divine truth. He could not understand what Christ taught him, he could not take it in. It was impossible before the death of Christ; but on the day of Pentecost how he is able to expound the word of God as a spiritual man! I tell you, beloved, when the Holy Ghost comes upon a man he becomes a spiritual man, and instead of denying his Lord he denies himself, just remember that. In the sixteenth chapter of Matthew when Peter had said, "Lord, be it far from Thee, this shall never happen that Thou shalt be crucified," Christ said to Him: "Peter, not only will I be crucified, but you will have to be crucified too. If any man is to be My disciple, let him take up his cross to die upon it, let him deny himself, and let him follow Me." How did Peter obey that command? He went and denied Jesus! As long as a man, a Christian, is under the power of the flesh, he is continually denying Jesus. You always must do one of the two, you must deny self or you must deny Jesus, and, alas, Peter denied his Lord rather than deny himself. On the other hand, when the Holy Spirit came upon him, he could not deny his Lord, but he could deny himself, and he praised God for the privilege of suffering for Christ.

Now, how did the change come about? The words of my text tell us,--"And Peter went out and wept bitterly."

What does that mean? It means this, that the Lord led Peter to come to the end of himself, to see what was in his heart, and with his self-confidence to fall into the very deepest sin that a child of God could be guilty of;--publicly, with an oath, to deny his Lord Jesus! When Peter stood there in that great sin, the loving Jesus looked upon him, and that look, full of loving reproach, loving pity, pierced like an arrow through the heart of Peter, and he went out and wept bitterly. Praise God, that was the end of self-confident Peter! Praise God, that was the turning point of his life! He went out with a shame that no tongue can express. He woke up as out of a dream to the terrible reality "I have helped to crucify the blessed Son of God." No man can fathom what Peter must have passed through that Friday, Saturday and Sunday morning. But, blessed be God, on that Sunday Jesus revealed Himself to Peter, we know not how, but "He was seen of Simon;" then in the evening He came to him with the other disciples and breathed peace, and the Holy Spirit upon him; and then, later on, you know how the Lord asked him, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"--three times, until Peter was sorrowful, and said, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." What was it that wrought the transition from the love of the flesh to the love of the Spirit? I tell you, that was the beginning,--"Peter went out and wept bitterly," with a broken heart, with a heart that would give anything to show its love to Jesus. With a heart that had learned to give up all self-confidence, Peter was prepared for the blessing of the Holy Spirit.

And, now, you can easily see the application of this story. Are there not many just living the life of Peter, of the self-confident Peter as he was? Are there not many who are mourning under the consciousness, "I am so unfaithful to my Lord, I have no power against the flesh, I cannot conquer my temper, I give way just like Peter to the fear of man, of company, for people can influence me and make me do things I do not want to do, and I have no power to resist them? Circumstances get the mastery over me, and I then say and do things that I am ashamed of."? Is there not more than one, who, in answer to the question, "Are you living as a man filled with the Spirit, devoted to Jesus, following Him, fully giving up all for Him?"--must say with sorrow, "God knows I am not. Alas, my heart knows it."? You say it, and I come, and I press you with the question, Is not your position, and your character, and your conduct, just like that of Peter? Like Peter, you love Jesus, like Peter you know He is the Christ of God, like Peter you are very zealous in working for Him. Peter had cast out devils in His name, and had preached the gospel, and had healed the sick. Like Peter you have tried to work for Jesus; but, oh! under it all, isn't there something that comes up continually? Oh, Christian, what is it? I pray, and I try, and I do long to live a holy life, but the flesh is too strong, and sin gets the better of me, and continually I am pleasing self instead of denying it, and denying Jesus instead of pleasing Him. Come, all who are willing to make that confession, and let me ask you to look quietly at the other life that is possible for you.

Just as the Lord Jesus gave the Holy Spirit to Peter, He is willing to give the Holy Spirit to you. Are you willing to receive Him? Are you willing to give up yourself entirely as an empty, helpless vessel, to receive the power of the Holy Spirit, to live, to dwell, and to work in you every day? Dear believer, God has prepared such a beautiful and such a blessed life for every one of us, and God as a Father is waiting to see why you will not come to Him and let Him fill you with the Holy Ghost. Are you willing for it? I am sure some are. There are some who have said often, "O God, why can't I live that life?--Why can't I live every hour of unbroken fellowship with God?--Why can't I enjoy what my Father has given me, all the riches of His grace? It is for me He gave it, and why can't I enjoy it?" There are those who say, "Why can't I abide in Christ every day, and every hour, and every moment?--why can't I have the light of my Father's love filling my heart all the day long? Tell me, servant of God, what can help me?"

I can tell you one thing that will help you. What helped Peter? "Peter went out and wept bitterly." It must come with us to a conviction of sin; it must come with us to a real downright earnest repentance, or we never can get into the better life. We must stop complaining and confessing, "Yes, my life is not what it should be, and I will try to do better." That won't help you. What will help you? This,--that you go down in despair to lie at the feet of Jesus, and that you begin with a very real and bitter shame to make confession, "Lord Jesus, have compassion upon me! For these many years I have been a Christian, but there are so many sins from which I have not cleansed

myself,--temper, pride, jealousy, envy, sharp words, unkind judgments, unforgiving thoughts." One must say, "There is a friend whom I never have forgiven for what he has said." Another must say, "There is an enemy whom I dislike, I cannot say that I can love him." Another must say, "There are things in my business that I would not like brought out into the light of man." Another must say, "I am led captive by the law of sin and death." Oh, Christians, come and make confession with shame and say, "I have been bought with the Blood, I have been washed with the Blood, but just think of what a life I have been living! I am ashamed of it." Bow before God and ask Him by the Holy Spirit to make you more deeply ashamed, and to work in you that Divine contrition. I pray you take the step at once. "Peter went out and wept bitterly," and that was his salvation; yes, that was the turning point of his life. And shall we not fall upon our faces before God, and make confession, and get down on our knees under the burden of the terrible load, and say, "I know I am a believer, but I am not living as I should to the glory of my God. I am under the power of the flesh and all the self-confidence, and self-will, and self-pleasing that marks my life."

Dear Christians, do you not long to be brought nigh unto God? Would you not give anything to walk in close fellowship with Jesus every day? Would you not count it a pearl of great price to have the light and love of God shining in you all the day? Oh, come and fall down and make confession of sin; and, if you will do it, Jesus will come and meet you and He will ask you, "Lovest thou Me?" And, if you say, "Yes, Lord," very quickly He will ask again, "Lovest thou Me?"--and if you say, "Yes, Lord," again, He will ask a third time, "Lovest thou Me?"--and your heart will be filled with an unutterable sadness, and your heart will get still more broken down and bruised by the question, and you will say, "Lord, I have not lived as I should, but still I love Thee and I give myself to Thee." Oh, beloved may God give us grace now, that, with Peter, we may go out, and, if need be, weep bitterly. If we do not weep bitterly,--we are not going to force tears--shall we not sigh very deeply, and bow very humbly, and cry very earnestly, "O God, reveal to me the carnal life in which I have been living: reveal to me what has been hindering me from having my life full of the Holy Ghost"? Shall we not cry, "Lord, break my heart into utter self-despair, and, oh! bring me in helplessness to wait for the Divine power, for the power of the Holy Ghost, to take possession and to fill me with a new life given all to Jesus?"

IV. OUT OF AND INTO

And He brought us out from thence, that He might bring us in, to give us the land which He sware unto our Fathers." --Deut. 6:23.

I have spoken of the crisis that comes in the life of the man who sees that his Christian experience is low and carnal, and who desires to enter into the full life of God. Some Christians do not understand that there should be such a crisis. They think that they ought, from the day of their conversion, to continue to grow and progress. I have no objections to that, if they have grown as they ought. If their life has been so strong under the power of the Holy Ghost that they have grown as true believers should grow, I certainly have no objection to this. But I want to deal with those Christians whose life since conversion has been very much a failure, and who feel it to be such because of their not being filled with the Spirit, as is their blessed privilege. I want to say for their encouragement, that by taking one step, they can get out into the life of rest, and victory, and fellowship with God to which the promises of God invite them.

Look at the elder son in the parable. How long would it have taken him to get out of that state of blindness and bondage into the full condition of sonship? By believing in his father's love, he might have gotten out that very hour. If he had been powerfully convicted of his guilt in his unbelief, and had confessed like his prodigal brother, "I have sinned," he would have come that very moment into the favor of the son's happiness in his father's home. He would not have been detained by having a great deal to learn, and a great deal to do; but in one moment, his whole relation would have been changed.

Remember, too, what we saw in Peter's case. In one moment, the look of Jesus broke him down and there came to him the terribly bitter reflection of his sin, owing to his selfish, fleshly confidence, a contrition and reflection which laid the foundation for his new and better life with Jesus. God's word brings out the idea of the Christian's entrance into the new and better life by the history of the people of Israel's entrance into the land of Canaan.

In our text, we have these words:--"God brought us out from thence (Egypt), that He might bring us in" into Canaan. There are two steps: one was bringing them out; and the other was bringing them in. So in the life of the believer, there are ordinarily two steps quite separate from each other;--the bringing him out of sin and the world; and the bringing him into a state of complete rest afterward. It was the intention of God that Israel should enter the land of Canaan from Kadesh-Barnea, immediately after He had made His covenant with them at Sinai. But they were not ready to enter at once, on account of their sin and unbelief, and disobedience. They had to wander after that for forty years in the wilderness. Now, look how God led the people. In Egypt, there was a great crisis, where they had first to pass through the Red Sea, which is a figure of conversion; and when they went into Canaan, there was, as it were, a second conversion in passing through the Jordan. At our conversion, we get into liberty, out of the bondage of Egypt; but, when we fail to use our liberty through unbelief and disobedience, we wander in the wilderness for a longer or shorter period before we enter into the Canaan of victory, and rest, and abundance. Thus God does for His Israel two things:--He brings them out of Egypt; and He lead them into Canaan.
My message, then, is to ask this question of the believer:--Since you know you are converted and God has brought you out of Egypt, have you yet come into the land of Canaan? If not, are you willing that he should bring you into the fuller liberty and rest provided for His people? He brought Israel out of Egypt by a mighty hand, and the same mighty hand brought us out of our land of bondage; with the same mighty hand, He brought his ancient people into rest, and by that hand, too, He can bring us into our true rest. The same God who pardoned and regenerated us--is waiting to perfect His love in us, if we but trust Him. Are there many hearts saying:--"I believe that God brought me out of bondage twenty, or thirty, or forty years ago; but alas! I cannot say that I have been brought

into the happy land of rest and victory?"

How glorious was the rest of Canaan after all the wanderings in the wilderness! And so is it with the Christian who reaches the better promised Canaan of rest, when he comes to leave all his charge with the Lord Jesus--his responsibilities, anxieties, and worry; his only work being to hand the keeping of his soul into the hand of Jesus every day and hour. and the Lord can keep, and give the victory over every enemy. Jesus has undertaken not only to cleans our sin, and bring us to heaven, but also to keep us in our daily life.

I ask again:--Are you hungering to get free from sin and its power?--Anyone longing to get complete victory over his temper, his pride, and all his evil inclinations?--Hearts longing for the time when no clouds will come between them and their God?--Longing to walk in the full sunshine of God's loving favour? The very God who brought you from the Egypt of darkness is ready and able to bring you also into the Canaan of rest.

And now comes the question again:--What is the way by which God will bring me to this rest? What is needed on my part if God is really to bring me into the happy land? I give the answer first of all by asking another question:--Are you willing to forsake your wanderings in the wilderness? If you say "We do not want to leave our wanderings, where we have had so many wonderful indications of God's presence with us; so many remarkable proofs of the Divine care and goodness, like that of the ancient people of God, who had the pillar to guide them, and the manna given them every day for forty years; Moses and Aaron to lead and advise them. The wilderness is to us, on account of these things, a kind of sacred place; and we are loath to leave it." If the children of Israel had said anything of this kind to Joshua, he would have said to them (and we all would have said):--"Oh, you fools: It is the very God who gave you the pillar of cloud and the other blessings in the wilderness, who tells you how to come into the land flowing with milk and honey." And so I can speak to you in the same way; I bring you the message that He who has brought you thus far on your journey, and given you such blessings thus far, is the God who will bring you into the Canaan of complete victory and rest.
The first question, then, that I would ask you is,

ARE YOU READY TO LEAVE THE WILDERNESS?

You know the mark of Israel's life in the wilderness--the cause of all their troubles there--was unbelief. They did not believe that God could take them into the promised land. And then followed many sins and failures--lusting, idolatry, murmuring, etc. That has, perhaps, been your life, beloved; you do not believe that God will fulfill His word. You do not believe in the possibility of unbroken fellowship with Him, and unlimited partnership. On account of that, you become disobedient, and did not live like a child doing God's will, because you did not believe that God could give you the victory over sin. Are you willing now to leave that wilderness life? Sometimes you are, perhaps, enjoying fellowship with God, and sometimes you are separated from Him; sometimes you have nearness to Him, and at other times great distance from Him; sometimes you have a willingness to walk closely with Him, but sometimes there is even unwillingness. Are you now going to give up your whole life to Him? Are you going to approach Him and say, "My God, I do not want to do anything that will be displeasing to Thee; I want Thee to keep me from all worldliness, from all self-pleasure; I want Thee, O God, to help me to live like Peter after Pentecost, filled with the Holy Ghost, and not like carnal Peter."

Beloved, are you willing to say this? Are you willing to give up your sins, to walk with God continually, to submit yourself wholly to the will of God, and have no will of your own apart from His will? Are you going to live a perfect life? I hop you are, for I believe in such a life;--not perhaps in the sense in which you understand "perfection"--entire freedom from wrong-doing and all inclination to it, for while we live in the flesh the flesh will lust against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; but the perfection spoken of in the Old Testament as practiced by some of God's saints, who are said to have "served the Lord with a perfect heart." What is this

perfection? A state in which your hearts will be set on perfect integrity without any reserve, and your will wholly subservient to God's will. Are you willing for such a perfection, with your whole heart turned away from the world and given to God alone? Are you going to say, "No, I do not expect that I will ever give up my self-will."? It is the devil tempting you to think it will be too hard for you. Oh! I would plead with God's children just to look at the will of God, so full of blessing, of holiness, of love; will you not give up your guilty will for that blessed will of God? A man can do it in one moment when he comes to see that God can change his will for him. Then he may say farewell to his old will, as Peter did when he went out and wept bitterly, and when the Holy Spirit filled his soul on the day of Pentecost. Joshua "wholly followed the Lord his God." He failed, indeed, before the enemy at Ai, because he trusted too much to human agency, and not sufficiently to God; and he failed in the same manner when he made a covenant with the Gibeonites; but still, his spirit and power differed very widely from that of the people whose unbelief drove them before their enemies and kept them in the wilderness. Let us be willing wholly to serve the Lord our God, and "make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof." Let us believe in the love and power of God to keep us day by day, and put "no confidence in the flesh."

Then comes the second step:--"I must believe that such a life in the land of Canaan is a possible life." Yes, many a one will say, "Ah! what would I give to get out of the wilderness life! But I cannot believe that it is possible to live in this constant communion with God. You don't know my difficulties--my business cares and perplexities; I have all sorts of people to associate with; have gone out in the morning braced up by communion with God in prayer, but the pressure of business before night has driven out of my heart all that warmth of love that I had, and the world has gotten in and made the heart as cold as before." But we must remember again what it was that kept Israel out of Canaan. When Caleb and Joshua said, "We are able to overcome the enemy," the ten spies, and the six hundred thousand answered, "We cannot do it; they are too strong for us." Take care, dear reader, that we do not repeat their sin, and provoke God as these unbelievers did. He says, it is possible to bring us into the land of rest and peace; and I believe it because He has said so, and because He will do it if I trust Him. Your temper may be terrible; your pride may have bound you a hundred times; your temptations may "compass you about like bees," but there is victory for you if you will but trust the promises of God.

Looking again at Peter. He had failed again and again, and went from bad to worse until he came to denying Christ with oaths. But what a change came over him! Just study the first epistle of Peter, and you will see that the very life of Christ had entered into him. He shows the spirit of true humility, so different from his former self-confidence; and glorying in God's will instead of in his own. He had made a full surrender to Christ, and was trusting entirely in Him. Come therefore to-day and say to God, "Thou didst so change selfish, proud Peter, and Thou canst change me likewise." Yes, God is able to bring you into Canaan, the land of rest. You know the first half of the 8th of Romans. Have you noticed the expressions that are to be found there--"The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death". To walk after the spirit; To be after the spirit; To be in the Spirit; To have the Spirit dwelling in us. Through the Spirit to mortify the deeds of the body; To be led by the Spirit; To be spiritually minded. These are all blessings which come when we bind ourselves wholly to live in the Spirit. If we live after the Spirit we have the very nature of the Spirit in us. If we live in the Spirit, we shall be led by Him every day and every moment. What if you were to open your heart to-day to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Would He not be able to keep you every moment in the sweet rest of God? and would not His mighty arm give you a complete victory over sin and temptation of every kind, and make you able to live in perpetual fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ? Most certainly! This, then, is the second step; this is the blessed life God has provided for us. First, God brought us out of Egypt; secondly, He brings us into Canaan. Then comes--
Thirdly, the question,

HOW DOES GOD BRING US IN?

By leading us in a very definite act, viz., that of committing ourselves wholly to Him;--entrusting ourselves to Him, that He may bring us into the land of rest, and keep us in.

You remember that the Jordan at the time of harvest overflowed its banks. The hundreds of thousands of Israel were on the side of the river from Canaan. They were told that tomorrow, God would do wonderful things for them. The trumpet would sound, and the priests would take up the ark--the symbol of God's presence--and pass over before the people. But there lay the swollen river still. If there still unbelieving children among the the people, they would say, "What fools, to attempt to cross now! This is not the time to attempt fording the river, for it is now twenty feet deep." But the believing people gathered together behind the priests with the ark. They obeyed the command of Joshua to advance; but they knew not what God was going to do? The priests walked right into the water, and the hearts of some began to tremble. They would perhaps ask, "Where is the rod of Moses?" But, as the priests walked straight on and stepped into the water, the waters rose up on the upper side in to a high wall, and flowed away on the other side, and a clear passage was made for the whole camp. Now, it was God that did this for the people; and it was because Joshua and the people believed and obeyed God. The same God will do it to-day, if we believe and trust Him.

Am I addressing a soul who is saying:--I remember how God first brought me out of the land of bondage. I was in complete darkness of soul and was deeply troubled. I did not at first believe that God could take me out, and that I could become a child of God. But, at last, God took me and brought me to trust in Jesus, and He led me out safely." Friend, you have the same God now who brought you out of bondage with a high hand; and can lead you into the place of rest. Look to Him and say, "O God, make an end of my wilderness life--my sinful and unbelieving life,--a life of grieving Thee. Oh, bring me to-day into the land of victory and rest and blessing!" Is this the prayer of your hearts, dear friends? Are you going to give up yourselves to Him to do this for you? Can you trust Him that He is able and willing to do it for you. He can take you through the swollen river this very moment;--yes, this very moment.

And He can do more: After Israel had crossed the river, the Captain of the Lord's host had to come and encourage Joshua, promising to take charge of the army and remain with them. You need the power of God's Spirit to enable you to overcome sin and temptation. You need to live in His fellowship--in His unbroken fellowship, without which you cannot stand or conquer. If you are to venture to-day, say by faith "My God, I know that Jesus Christ is willing to be the Captain of my salvation, and to conquer every enemy for me, He will keep me by faith and by His Holy Spirit; and though it be dark to me, and as if the waters would pass over my soul, and though my condition seem hopeless, I will walk forward, for God is going to bring me in to-day, and I am going to follow Him. My God, I follow Thee now into the promised land."

Perhaps some have already entered in, and the angels have seen them, while they have been reading these solemn words. Is there anyone still hesitating because the waters of Jordan look threatening and impassable?
Oh! come, beloved soul; come at once, and doubt not.

V. THE BLESSING SECURED

"Be filled with the Spirit."--Ephesians, 5:18.

I may have some air, a little air, in my lungs, but not enough to keep up a healthy, vigorous life. But everyone seeks to have his lungs well filled with air, and the benefit of it will be felt in his blood and through his whole being. And just so the word of God comes to us, and says, "Christians, do not be content with thinking that you have the Spirit, or have a little of the Spirit; but, if you want to have a healthy life, be "filled with the Spirit." Is that your life? Or are you ready to cry out, "Alas, I do not know what it is to be filled with the Spirit, but it is what I long for." I want to point out to such the path to come to this great, precious blessing which is meant for everyone of us.

Before I speak further of it, let me just note one misunderstanding which prevails. People often look upon being "filled with the Spirit" as something that comes with a mighty stirring of the emotions, a sort of heavenly glory that comes over them, something that they can feel strongly and mightily; but that is not always the case. I was recently in Niagara Falls. I noticed, and I was told, that the water was unusually low. Suppose the river were doubly full, how would you see that fulness in the Falls? In the increased volume of water pouring over the cataract, and its tremendous noise. But go to another part of the river, or to the lake, where the very same fulness is found, and there is perfect quiet and placidity, the rise of the water is gentle and gradual, and you can hardly notice that there is any disturbance as the lake gets full. And just so it may be with a child of God. To one it comes with mighty emotion and with a blessed consciousness, "God has touched me!" To others it comes in a gentle filling of the whole being with the presence and the power of God by His Spirit. I do not want to lay down the way in which it is to come to you, but I want you simply to take your place before God, and say, "My Father, whatever it may mean, that is what I want." If you come and give yourself up as an empty vessel and trust God to fill you, God will do His own work.

And now, the simple question as to the steps by which we can come to be "filled with the Spirit." I shall note four steps in the way by which a man can attain this wonderful blessing. He must say, (1), "I must have it," then, (2), "I may have it," and, then, (3) "I will have it," and then, last, Thank God, "I shall have it."

1. The first word a man must begin to say, is, "I must have it." He must feel "It is a command of God, and I cannot live unfilled with the Spirit without disobeying God." It is a command here in this text,--"Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit." Just as much as a man dare not get drunk, if he is a Christian, just as much must a man be filled with the Spirit. God wants it, and oh, that every one might be brought to say, "I must, if I am to please God, I must be filled with the Spirit!"

I fear there is a terrible, terrible self-satisfaction among many Christians,--they are content with their low level of life. They think they have the Spirit because they are converted, but they know very little of the joy of the Holy Ghost, and of the sanctifying power of the Spirit. They know very little of the fellowship of the Spirit linking them to God and to Jesus. They know very little of the power of the Spirit to testify for God, and yet they are content; and one says, "Oh, it is only for eminent Christians." A very dear young friend once said to me as I was talking to her--(it was a niece of my own)--"Oh, Uncle Andrew, I cannot try to make myself better than the Christians around me. Wouldn't that be presumptuous?" And I said, "My child, you must not ask what the Christians around you are, but you must be guided by what God says." She has since confessed to me how bitterly ashamed she has become of that expression, and how she went to God to seek His blessing. Oh, friends, do not be content with that half Christian life that many of you are living, but say, "God wants it, God commands it; I must be filled with the Spirit."

And look not only at God's command, but look at the need of your own soul. You are a parent, and you want your children blessed and converted, and you complain that you haven't power to bless them. You say, "My home must be filled with God's Spirit." You complain of your own soul, of times of darkness and of leanness; you complain of watchlessness and wandering. A young minister once said to me, "Oh, why is it I have such a delight in study and so little delight in prayer?"--and my answer was, "My brother, your heart must get filled with a love for God and Jesus, and then you will delight in prayer." You complain sometimes that you cannot pray. You pray so short, you do not know what to pray, something drags you back from the closet. It is because you are living a life, trying to live a life, without being filled with the Spirit. Oh, think of the needs of the church around you. You are a Sunday School teacher; you are trying to teach a class of ten or twelve children, not one of them, perhaps, converted, and they go out from under you unconverted; you are trying to do a heavenly work in the power of the flesh and earth. Sunday School teachers, do begin to say, "I must be filled with the Spirit of God, or I must give up the charge of those young souls; I cannot teach them."

Or, think of the need of the world. If you were to send out missionaries full of the Holy Ghost, what a blessing that would be! Why is it, that many a missionary complains in the foreign field, "There I learned how weak and how unfit I am?" It is because the churches from which they go are not filled with the Holy Ghost. Someone said to me in England a few weeks ago, "They talk so much about the volunteer movement and more missionaries; but we want something else, we want missionaries filled with the Holy Ghost." If the church is to come right, and the mission field is to come right, we must each begin with himself. It must begin with you. Begin with yourself and say, "O God, for Thy sake; O God, for Thy church's sake; O God, for the sake of the world, help me! I must be filled with the Holy Ghost."

What folly it would be for a man who had lost a lung and a half, and had hardly a quarter of a lung to do the work of two, to expect to be a strong man and to do hard work, and to live in any climate! And what folly for a man to expect to live--God has told him he cannot live--a full Christian life, unless he is full of the Holy Ghost! And what folly for a man who has only got a little drop of the river of the water of life to expect to live and to have power with God and man! Jesus wants us to come and to receive the fulfillment of the promise, "He that believeth in Me, streams of water shall flow out from him." Oh, begin to say, "If I am to live a right life, if I am in every part of my daily life and conduct to glorify my God, I must have the Holy Spirit--I must be filled with the Spirit." Are you going to say that? Talking for months and months won't help. Do submit to God, and as an act of submission say, "Lord, I confess it, I ought to be filled, I must be filled; help me!" And God will help you.

And, then comes the second step, I may be filled. The first had reference to duty; the second has reference to privilege--I may be filled. Alas! So many have got accustomed to their low state that they do not believe that they may, they can, actually be filled. And what right have I to say that you ought to take these words into your lips? My right is this--God wants healthy children. I say to-day a child of six months old, as beautiful and chubby as you could wish a child to be, and with what delight the eyes of the father and the mother looked upon him, and how glad I was to see a healthy child. And, oh; do you think that God in Heaven does not care for His children, and that God wants some of His children to live a sickly life? I tell you, it is a lie! God wants every child of His to be a healthy Christian; but you cannot be a healthy Christian unless you are filled with God's Spirit. Beloved, we have got accustomed to a style of life, and we see good Christians--as we call them--earnest men and women, full of failings; and we think, "Well, that is human; that man loses his temper, and that man is not as kind as he should be, and that man's word cannot be trusted always as ought to be the case; but--but--" And in daily life we look upon Christians and think, "Well, if they are very faithful in going to church and in giving to God's cause, and in attending the prayer meeting, and in having family prayers, and in their profession." Of course we thank God for them and say, "We wish there were more such," but we forget to ask, "What does God want?" Oh, that we might see that "It is meant for me and for everyone else." My brother, my sister, there is a God in Heaven who has been

longing for these past years, while you never thought about it, to fill you with the Holy Ghost. God longs to give the fulness of the Spirit to every child of His.

They were poor heathen Ephesians, only lately brought out from heathendom, to whom Paul wrote this letter,--people among whom there still was stealing and lying, for they had only just come out from heathendom; but Paul said to every one of these, "Be filled with the Spirit." God is ready to do it; God wants to do it. Oh, do not listen to the temptations of the devil, "This is only meant for some eminent people,--a Christian who has a great deal of free time to devote to prayer and to seeking after it,--a man of a receptive temperament,--that is the man to be filled with the Spirit. Who is there that dare say, "I cannot be filled with the Spirit." Who will dare to say that? If any of you speak thus it is because you are unwilling to give up sin. Do not think that you cannot be filled with the Spirit because God is not willing to give it to you. Did not the Lord Jesus promise the Spirit? Is not the Holy Spirit the best part of His salvation? Do you think He gives half a salvation to any of His redeemed ones? Is not His promise for all, "He that believeth in me, rivers of water shall flow out of him"? This is more than fulness- this is overflow; and this Jesus has promised to everyone who believes in Him. Oh, cast aside your fears, and your doubts, and your hesitation, and say at once, "I can be filled with the Spirit; I may be filled with the Spirit. There is nothing in heaven, or earth, or hell, can prevent it, because God has promised and God is waiting to do it for me." Are you ready to say, "I may I can, I can be filled with the Spirit, for God has promised it, and God will give it."?

And then we get to the third step, when a man says, "I will have it; I must have it; I may have it; I will have it." You know what this means in ordinary things, "I will have it," and he goes and does everything that is to be done to get permission. Very often a man comes and he wants to buy something, and he wishes for it; but wishing is not willing. I want to buy that horse, and a man asks of me $200 for it, but I don't want to give more than $180. I wish for it, I wish for it very much, and I can go and say, "Do give it me for the $180; and he says, "No, $200." I love the horse, it is just what I want, but I am not willing to give the $200; and at last he says, "Well, you must give me an answer; I can get another purchaser;" and at last I say, "No, I won't have it; I want it very much, I long for it, but I won't give the price."

Dear friends, are you going to say, "I will have this blessing?" What does that mean? It means, first of all, of course, that you are going to look around into your life, and if you see anything wrong there, it means that you are going to confess it to Jesus and say, "Lord, I cast it at Thy feet; it may be rooted in my heart, but I will give it up to Thee, I cannot take it out, but Jesus, Thou cleanser of sin, I give it to Thee." Let it be temper, or pride; let it be money, or lust, or pleasure; let it be the fear of man; let it be anything;--but, oh, say to Christ at once, "I will have this blessing at any cost." Oh, give up every sin to Jesus.

And it means not only giving up every sin, but--what is deeper than sin, and more difficult to get at--it means giving up yourself--self, with your will, and your pleasure, and your honor, and all you have, and saying, "Jesus, I am from this moment going to give myself up, that by Thy Holy Spirit Thou mayest take possession of me, and that Thou mayest by Thy Spirit turn out whatever is sinful, and take entire command of me." This looks difficult so long as Satan blinds, and makes us think it would be a hard thing to give up all that; but if God opens our eyes for one minute to see what a heavenly blessedness, and what heavenly riches and heavenly glory it is to be filled with the Spirit out of the heart of Jesus, then we will say, "I will give anything, anything, ANYTHING but I will have the blessing."

And then, it means that you are just to cast yourself at His feet and to say, "Lord, I will have the blessing."

Ah, Satan often tempts us, and says, "Suppose God were to ask that of you, would you be willing to give it?"--and he makes us afraid. But how many have found, and have been able to tell about it, that when once they have said,

"Lord, anything and everything!" the light and the joy of heaven filled their hearts.

Last year at Johannesburg, the gold fields of South Africa, at an afternoon meeting we had one day testimony, and a woman rose up and told us how her pastor two months ago had held a consecration service in a tent, and he had spoken strongly about consecration, and had said, "Now, if God were to send your husband away to China, or if God were to ask you to go away to America, would you be willing for it? You must give yourself up entirely." And the woman said--and her face beamed with brightness when she spoke,--when, at the close of the meeting he asked those to rise who were willing to give up all to be filled with the Spirit, she said, "The struggle was terrible; God may take away my husband or my children from me, and am I ready for it? Oh, Jesus is very precious, but I cannot say I will give up all. But I will tell Him I do want to do it."--and at last she stood up. She said she went home that night in a terrible struggle, and she could not sleep, for the thought was, "I said to Jesus everything, and could I give up husband or child?" The struggle continued till midnight, "but," she said, "I would not let go; I said to Jesus, `everything, but fill me with Thyself.'" And the joy of the Holy Spirit came down upon her, and her minister who sat there told me afterwards that the testimony was a true one, and for the two months her life had been one of exceeding brightness and of heavenly joy.

Oh, is any reader tempted to say, "I cannot give up all"? I take you by the hand, my brother, my sister, and I bring you to the crucified Jesus, and I say, "Just look at Him, how He loved you on Calvary; just look at Him." Just look at Jesus! He offers actually to fill your heart with His Holy Spirit, with the Spirit of His love and of His fulness, and of His power, actually to make your heart full of the Holy Spirit; and do you dare to say, "I am afraid,"--do you dare to say, "I cannot do that for Jesus"? or will your heart not, at His feet, cry out, "Lord Jesus, anything, but I must be filled with Thy Spirit!" Haven't you often prayed for the presence and the abiding nearness and the love of Jesus to fill you?--but that cannot be until you are filled with the Holy Spirit. Oh, come and say, in view of any sacrifice, "I will have it, by God's help! Not in my strength, but by the help of God, I will have it!"

And then comes my last point. Say, "I shall have it." Praise God that a man dare say that, "I shall have it." Yes, when a man has made up his mind; when a man has been brought to a conviction and a sorrow for his sinful life; when a man, like Peter, has wept bitterly or has sighed deeply before God, "Oh, my Lord, what a life I have been living!"--when a man has felt wretched in the thought, "I am not living the better life, the Jesus life, the Spirit life;"--when a man begins to feel that, and when he comes and makes surrender, and casts himself upon God and claims the promise, "Lord, I may have it; it is for me,"--what think you? Hasn't he a right to say, "I shall have it"? Yes, beloved, and I give to every one of you that message from God, that if you are willing, and if you are ready, God is willing and ready to close the bargain at once. Yes, you can have it now, now! without any outburst of feeling, without any flooding of the heart with light, you may have it. To some it comes in that way but to many not. As a quiet transaction of the surrendered will, you can lift up your heart in faith and say, "O God, here I do give myself as an empty vessel to be filled with the Holy Ghost. I give myself up once for all and forever. `"Tis done, the great transaction's done.'" You can say it now if you will take your place before God.

Oh, ministers of the gospel, have you never felt the need of being filled with the Holy Ghost? Your heart perhaps tells you that you know nothing of that blessing. Oh, workers for Christ, have you never felt a need, "I must be filled with the Holy Ghost"? Oh, children of God, have you never felt a hope rise within you, "I may have this blessing, I hear of from others"? Will you not take the step and say, "I will have it"? Say it, not in your own strength, but in self-despair. Never mind though it appears as if the heart is all cold and closed up, never mind; but as an act of obedience and of surrender, as an act of the will, cast yourself before Jesus and trust Him. "I shall have it, for I now give up myself into the arms of my Lord Jesus, I shall have it, for it is the delight of Jesus to give the Holy Spirit from the Father, into the heart of everyone. I shall have it, for I do believe in Jesus, and He promised me that out of him that believeth shall flow rivers of living water. I shall have it! I SHALL have it! I will cling to the feet of Jesus, I will stay at the throne of God; I shall have it, for God is faithful, and God has

promised."

VI. THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST

"But straightway Jesus spake unto them saying, Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid."--Matt. 14:27.

All we have had about the work of the blessed Spirit is dependent upon what we think of Jesus, for it is from Christ Jesus that the Spirit comes to us; it is to Christ Jesus that the Spirit ever brings us; and the one need of the Christian life day by day and hour by hour is this,--the presence of the Son of God. God is our salvation. If I have Christ with me and Christ in me, I have full salvation. We have spoken about the life of failure and of the flesh, about the life of unbelief and disobedience, about the life of ups and downs, the wilderness life of sadness and of sorrow; but we have heard, and we have believed, there is deliverance. Bless God, He brought us out of Egypt, that He might bring us into Canaan, into the very rest of God and Jesus Christ. He is our peace, He is our rest. Oh, if I may only have the presence of Jesus as the victory over every sin: the presence of Jesus as the strength for every duty, then my life shall be in the full sunshine of God's unbroken fellowship, and the word will be fulfilled to me in most blessed experience, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all I have is thine," and my heart shall answer, "Father, I never knew it, but it is true,--I am ever with thee and all Thou hast is mine." God has given all He has to Christ, and God longs that Christ should have you and me entirely. I come to every hungry heart and say, "If you want to live to the glory of God, seek one thing, to claim, to believe that the presence of Jesus can be with you every moment of your life.

I want to speak about the presence of Jesus as it is set before us in that blessed story of Christ's walking on the sea. Come and look with me at some points that are suggested to us.

1. Think, first, of the presence of Christ lost. You know the disciples loved Christ, clung to Him, and with all their failings, they delighted in Him. But what happened? The Master went up into the mountain to pray, and sent them across the sea all alone without Him; there came a storm, and they toiled, rowed, and labored, but the wind was against them, they made no progress, they were in danger of perishing, and how their hearts said, "Oh, if the Master only were here!" But His presence was gone. They missed Him. Once before, they had been in a storm, and Christ had said, "Peace, be still," and all was well; but here they are in darkness, danger, and terrible trouble, and no Christ to help them. Ah, isn't that the life of many a believer at times? I get into darkness, I have committed sin, the cloud is on me, I miss the face of Jesus; and for days and days I work, worry, and labor; but it is all in vain, for I miss the presence of Christ. Oh, beloved, let us write that down,--the presence of Jesus lost is the cause of all our wretchedness and failure.

2. Look at the second step,--the presence of Jesus dreaded. They were longing for the presence of Christ, and Christ came after midnight: He came walking on the water amid the waves; but they didn't recognize Him, and they cried out, for fear, "It is a spirit!" Their beloved Lord was coming nigh, and they knew Him not. They dreaded His approach. And, ah, how often have I seen a believer dreading the approach of Christ,--crying out for Him, longing for Him, and yet dreading His coming. And why? Because Christ came in a fashion that they expected not.

Perhaps some have been saying, "Alas, alas! I fear I never can have the abiding presence of Christ." You have heard what we have said about a life in the Spirit: you have heard what we have said about abiding ever in the presence of God and in His fellowship, and you have been afraid of it, afraid of it; and you have said, "It is too high and too difficult." You have dreaded the very teaching that was going to help you. Jesus came to you in the teaching, and you didn't recognize His love.

Or, perhaps, He came in a way that you dreaded His presence. Perhaps God has been speaking to you about some sin. There is that sin of temper, or that sin of unlovingness, or that sin of unforgivingness, or that sin of worldliness, compromise, and fellowship with the world, that love of man and man's honor, that fear of man and man's opinion, or that pride and self confidence. God has been speaking to you about it, and yet you have been frightened. That was Jesus wanting to draw you nigh, but you were afraid. You don't see how you can give up all that, you are not ready to say, "At any sacrifice I am going to have that taken out of me, and I will give it up," and while God and Christ were coming nigh to bless you, you were afraid of Him.

Oh, believers, at other times Christ has come to you with affliction, and perhaps you have said, "If I want to be entirely holy, I know I shall have to be afflicted, and I am afraid of affliction," and you have dreaded the thought, "Christ may come to me in affliction." The presence of Christ dreaded!--oh, beloved, I want to tell you it is all misconception. The disciples had no reason to dread that "spirit" coming there, for it was Christ Himself; and, when God's word comes close to you and touches your heart, remember that is Christ out of Whose mouth goes the two-edged sword. It is Christ in His love coming to cut away the sin, that He may fill your heart with the blessing of God's love. Beware of dreading the presence of Christ.

3. Then comes the third thought,--the presence of Christ revealed. Bless God! When Christ heard how they cried, he spoke the words of the text, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." Ah, what gladness those words brought to those hearts! There is Jesus, that dark object appears, that dreaded form. It is our blessed Lord Himself. And, dear friends, the Master's object, whether it be by affliction or otherwise, is to prepare for receiving the presence of Christ, and through it all Jesus speaks, "It is I; be not afraid." The presence of Christ revealed! I want to tell you that the Son of God, oh believer, is longing to reveal Himself to you. Listen! Listen! LISTEN! Is there any longing heart? Jesus says, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid."

Oh, beloved; God has given us Christ. And does God want me to have Christ every moment? Without doubt. God wants the presence of Christ to be the joy of every hour of my life, and, if there is one thing sure, Christ can reveal Himself to me every moment. Are you willing to come and claim this privilege? He can reveal Himself. I cannot reveal Him to you; you cannot grasp Him; but He can shine into your heart. How can I see the sunlight tomorrow morning, if I am spared? The sunlight will reveal itself. How can I know Christ? Christ can reveal Himself. And, ere I go further, I pray you to set your heart upon this, and to offer the humble prayer, "Lord, now reveal Thyself to me, so, that I may never lose the sight of Thee. Give me to understand that through the thick darkness Thou comest to make Thyself known." Let not one heart doubt, however dark it may be,--at midnight,--whatever midnight there be in the soul,--at midnight, in the dark, Christ can reveal Himself. Ah, thank God, often after a life of ten and twenty years of dawn, after a life of ten and twenty years of struggling, now in the light, and now in the dark, there comes a time when Jesus is willing just to give Himself to us, nevermore to part. God grant us that presence of Jesus!

4. And now comes the fourth thought,--The presence of Jesus lost, was the first; the presence of Jesus dreaded, was the second; the presence of Jesus revealed, was the third; the presence of Jesus desired, is the fourth. What happened? Peter heard the Lord, and yonder was Jesus, some 30, 40, 50 yards distant, and He made as though He would have passed them; and Peter,--in a preceding chapter I spoke about Peter, shewing what terrible failure and carnality there was in him,--but, bless the Lord, Peter's heart was right with Christ, and he wanted to claim His presence, and he said, "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come upon the water to Thee." Yes, Peter could not rest; he wanted to be as near to Christ as possible. He saw Christ walking on the water; he remembered Christ had said, "Follow Me;" he remembered how Christ, with the miraculous draught of fishes, had proved that He was Master of the sea, and of the waters, and he remembered how Christ had stilled the storm; and, without argument or reflection, all at once he said, "There is my Lord manifesting Himself in a new way; there is my Lord exercising a new and supernatural power, and I can go to my Lord, He is able to make me walk where He walks." He wanted

to walk like Christ, he wanted to walk near Christ. He didn't say, "Lord, let me walk around the sea here," but he said, "Lord, let me come to Thee."

Friends, would you not like to have the presence of Christ in this way? Not that Christ should come down,--that is what many Christians want; they want to continue in their sinful walk, they want to continue in their worldly walk, they want to continue in their old life, and they want Christ to come down to them with His comfort, His presence, and His love; but that cannot be. If I am to have the presence of Christ, I must walk as He walked. His walk was a supernatural one. He walked in the love and in the power of God. Most people walk according to the circumstances in which they are, and most people say, "I am depending upon circumstances for my religion. A hundred times over you hear people say, "My circumstances prevent my enjoying unbroken fellowship with Jesus." What were the circumstances that were found about Christ? The wind and the waves,--and Christ walked triumphant over circumstances; and Peter said, "Like my Lord I can triumph over all circumstances: anything around me is nothing, if I have Jesus." He longed for the presence of Christ. Would God that, as we look at the life of Christ upon earth, as we look how Christ walked and conquered the waves, every one of us could say, "I want to walk like Jesus." If that is your heart's desire, you can expect the presence of Jesus; but as long as you want to walk on a lower level than Christ, as long as you want to have a little of the world, and a little of self-will, do not expect to have the presence of Christ. Near Christ, and like Christ,--the two things go together. Have you taken that in? Peter wanted to walk like Christ that he might get near Christ; and it is this I want to offer every one of you. I want to say to the weakest believer, "With God's presence you can have the presence and fellowship of Christ all the day long, your whole life through." I want to bring you that promise, but I must give God's condition,--walk like Christ, and you shall always abide near Christ. The presence of Christ invites you to come and have unbroken fellowship with Him.

5. Then comes the next thought. We have just had the presence of Christ desired, and my next thought is,--the presence of Christ trusted. The Lord Jesus said, "Come," and what did Peter do? He stepped out of the boat. How did he dare to do it against all the laws of nature?--how did he dare to do it? He sought Christ, he heard Christ's voice, he trusted Christ's presence and power, and in the faith of Christ he said, "I can walk on the water," and he stepped out of the boat. Here is the turning point; here is the crisis. Peter saw Christ in the manifestation of a supernatural power, and Peter believed that supernatural power could work in him, and he could live a supernatural life. He believed this applied to walking on the sea; and herein lies the whole secret of the life of faith. Christ had supernatural power,--the power of heaven, the power of holiness, the power of fellowship with God, and Christ can give me grace to live as He lived. If I will but, like Peter, look at Christ and say to Christ, "Lord, speak the word, and I will come," and if I will listen to Christ saying, "Come," I, too, shall have power to walk upon the waves.

Have you ever seen a more beautiful and more instructive symbol of the Christian life? I once preached on it many years ago, and the thought that filled my heart then was this,--the Christian life compared to Peter walking on the waves, nothing so difficult and impossible without Christ, nothing so blessed and safe with Christ. That is the Christian life,--impossible without Christ's nearness,--most safe and blessed, however difficult, if I only have the presence of Christ. Believers, we have tried in these pages to call you to a better life in the Spirit, to a life in the fellowship with God. There is only one thing can enable you to live it,--you must have the Lord Jesus hold your hand every minute of the day. "But can that be?" you ask. Yes, it can. "I have so much to think of. Sometimes for four or five hours of the day I have to go into the very thick of business and have some ten men standing around me, each claiming my attention. How can I, how can I always have the presence of Jesus?" Beloved, because Jesus is your God and loves you wonderfully, and is able to make His presence more clear to you than that of ten men who are standing around you. If you will in the morning take time and enter into your covenant every morning with Him, "My Lord Jesus, nothing can satisfy me but Thine abiding presence," He will give it to you, He will surely give it to you. Oh, Peter trusted the presence of Christ, and He said, "If Christ calls

me I can walk on the waves to Him." Shall we trust the presence of Christ? To walk through all the circumstances and temptations of life is exactly like walking on the water,--you have no solid ground under your feet, you do not know how strong the temptations of Satan may come; but do believe God wants you to walk in a supernatural life above human power. God wants you to live a life in Christ Jesus. Are you wanting to live that life? Come then, and say, "Jesus, I have heard Thy promise that Thy presence will go with me. Thou hast said, "My presence shall go with thee,"--and, Lord, I claim it; I trust Thee."

6. Now, the sixth step in this wonderful history. The presence of Christ forgotten. Peter got out of the boat and began to walk toward the Lord Jesus with his eyes fixed upon Him. The presence of Christ was trusted by him, and he walked boldly over the waves; but all at once he took his eyes off Jesus, and he began at once to sink, and there was Peter, his walk of faith at an end; all drenched and drowning and crying, "Lord, help me!" There are some of you saying in your hearts, I know, "Ah, that's what will come of your higher-life Christians." There are people who say, "You never can life that life; do not talk of it; you must always be failing." Peter always failed before Pentecost. It was because the Holy Spirit had not yet come, and therefore his experience goes to teach us, that while Peter was still in the life of the flesh he must fail somehow or other. But, thank God, there was One to life him out of the failure; and our last point will be to prove that out of that failure he came into closer union with Jesus than ever before, and deeper dependence. But listen, first, while I speak to you about this failure.

Someone may say, "I have been trying, to say, `Lord, I will live it;' but, tell me, suppose failure come, what then?" Learn from Peter what you ought to do. What did Peter do? The very opposite of what most do. What did he do when he began to sink? That very moment, without one word of self-reproach of self-condemnation, he cried, "Lord, help me!" I wish I could teach every Christian that. I remember the time in my spiritual life when that became clear to me; for up to that time, when I failed, my only thought was to reproach and condemn myself, and I thought that would do me good. I found it didn't do me good; and I learn from Peter that my work is, the very moment I fail, to say, "Jesus, Master, help me!" and the very moment I say that, Jesus does help me. Remember, failure is not an impossibility. I can conceive more than one Christian who said, "Lord, I claim the fulness of the Holy Ghost. I want to live every hour of every day filled with the Holy Spirit;" and I can conceive that an honest soul who said that with a trembling faith, yet may have fallen; I want to say to that soul, Don't be discouraged. If failure comes, at once, without any waiting, appeal to Jesus. He is always ready to hear, and the very moment you find there is the temper, the hasty word, or some other wrong, at once the living Jesus is near, so gracious, and so mighty. Appeal to Him and there will be help at once. If you learn to do this, Jesus will lift you up and lead you on to a walk where His strength shall secure you from failure.

7.And then comes my last thought. The presence of Jesus was forgotten while Peter looked at the waves; but now, lastly, we have the presence of Jesus restored. Yes, Christ stretched out His hand to save him. Possibly--for Peter was a very proud, self-confident man--possibly he had to sink there to teach him that his faith could not save him, but it was the power of Christ. God wants us to learn the lesson that when we fall then we can cry out to Jesus, and at once He reaches out His hand. Remember, Peter walked back to the boat without sinking again. Why? Because Christ was very near him. Remember it is quite possible, if you use your failure rightly, to be far nearer Christ after it than before. Use it rightly, I say. That is, come and acknowledge, "In me there is nothing, but I am going to trust my Lord unboundedly." Let every failure teach you to cling afresh to Christ, and He will prove Himself a mighty and a loving Helper. The presence of Jesus restored! Yes, Christ took him by the hand and helped him, and I don't know whether they walked hand in hand those forty or fifty yards back to the boat, or whether Christ allowed Peter to walk beside Him; but this I know, they were very near to each other, and it was the nearness of his Lord that strengthened him.

Remember what has taken place since that happened with Peter. The cross has been erected, the blood has been shed, the grave has been opened, the resurrection has been accomplished, heaven has been opened, and the Spirit

of the Exalted One has come down. Do believe that it is possible for the presence of Jesus to be with us every day and all the way. Your God has given you Christ, and He wants to give you Christ into your heart in such a way that His presence shall be with you every moment of your life.

Who is willing to lift up his eyes and his heart and to exclaim, "I want to live according to God's standard?" Who is willing? Who is willing to cast himself into the arms of Jesus and to live a life of faith victorious over the winds and the waves, over the circumstances and difficulties? Who is willing to say this,--"Lord, bid me come to Thee upon the water?" Are you willing? Listen! Jesus says, "Come." Will you step out at this moment? Yonder is the boat, the old life that Peter had been leading; he had been familiar with the sea from his boyhood, and that boat was a very sacred place; Christ had sat beside him there; Christ had preached from that boat, from that boat of Peter's, Christ had given the wonderful draught of fishes; it was a very sacred boat; but Peter left it to come to a place more sacred still,--walking with Jesus on the water,--a new and a Divine experience. Your Christian life may be a very sacred thing; you may say, "Christ saved me by His blood, He has given me many an experience of grace; God has proved His grace in my heart," but you confess "I haven't got the real life of abiding fellowship; the winds and the waves often terrify me, and I sink." Oh, come out of the boat of past experiences at once; come out of the boat of external circumstances; come out of the boat, and step out on the word of Christ, and believe, "With Jesus I can walk upon the water." When Peter was in the boat, what had he between him and the bottom of the sea? A couple of planks; but when he stepped out upon the water what had he between him and the sea? Not a plank, but the word of the Almighty Jesus. Will you come, and without any experience, will you rest upon the word of Jesus, "Lo I am with you alway"? Will you rest upon His word, "Be of good cheer; fear not; it is I"? Every moment Jesus lives in heaven; every moment by His Spirit Jesus whispers that word; and every moment He lives to make it true. Accept it now, accept it now! My Lord Jesus is equal to every emergency. My Lord Jesus can meet the wants of every soul. My whole heart says, "He can, He can do it; He will, He will do it!" Oh come, believers, and let us claim most deliberately, most quietly, most restfully,--let us claim, claim it, claim it, CLAIM it.

VII. A WORD TO WORKERS

Some time ago I read this expression in an old author:--"The first duty of a clergyman is humbly to ask of God that all that he wants done in his hearers should first be truly and fully done in himself." These words have stuck to me ever since. What a solemn application this is to the subject that occupied our attention in previous chapters--the living and working under the fulness of the Holy Spirit! And yet, if we understand our calling aright, every one of us will have to say, That is the one thing on which everything depends. What profit is it to tell men that they may be filled with the Spirit of God, if, when they ask us, "Has God done it for you?" we have to answer, "No, He has not done it"? What profit is it for me to tell men that Jesus Christ can dwell within us every moment, and keep us from sin and actual transgression, and that the abiding presence of God can be our portion all the day, if I wait not upon God first to do it truly and full day by day?

Look at the Lord Jesus Christ; it was of the Christ Himself, when He had received the Holy Ghost from heaven, that John the Baptist said that "He would baptize with the Holy Ghost." I can only communicate to others what God has imparted to me. If my life as a minister be a life in which the flesh still greatly prevails--if my life be a life in which I grieve the Spirit of God, I cannot expect but that my people will receive through me a very mingled kind of life. But if the life of God dwell in me, and I am filled with His power, then I can hope that the life that goes out from me may be infused into my hearers too.

We have referred to the need of every believer being filled with the Spirit; and what is there of deeper interest to us now, or that can better occupy our attention, than prayerfully to consider how we can bring our congregations to believe that this is possible; and how we can lead on every believer to seek it for himself, to expect it, and to accept of it, so as to live it out? But, brethren, the message must come from us as a witness of our personal experience, by the grace of God. The same writer to whom I alluded, says elsewhere:--"The first business of a clergyman, when he sees men awakened and brought to Christ, is to lead them on to know the Holy Spirit." How true! Do not we find this throughout the word of God? John the Baptist preached Christ as the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world;" we read in Matthew that he also said that Christ would "baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire." In the gospel by John, we read that the Baptist was told that upon Whom he would see the Spirit descending and abiding, He it was who would baptize with the Spirit. Thus John the Baptist led the people on from Christ to the expectation of the Holy Ghost for themselves. And what did Jesus do? For three years, He was with His disciples, teaching and instructing them; but when He was about to go away, in His farewell discourse on the last night, what was His great promise to the disciples? "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth." He had previously promised to those who believed on Him, that "rivers of living water" should flow from them; which the Evangelist explains as meaning the Holy Ghost:--"Thus spake He of the Spirit." But this promise was only to be fulfilled after Christ "was glorified." Christ points to the Holy Spirit as the one fruit of being glorified. The glorified Christ leads to the Holy Ghost. So in the farewell discourse, Christ leads the disciples to expect the Spirit as the Father's great blessing. Then again, when Christ came and stood at the footstool of His heavenly throne, on the Mount of Olives, ready to ascend, what were His words? "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me." Christ's constant work was to teach His disciples to expect the Holy Spirit. Look through the Book of Acts, you see the same thing. Peter on the day of Pentecost preached that Christ was exalted, and had received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost; and so he told the people; "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." So, when I believe in Jesus risen, ascended, and glorified, I shall receive the Holy Ghost.

Look again, after Philip had preached the gospel in Samaria, men and women had been converted, and there was great joy in the city. The Holy Spirit had been working, but something was still wanting; Peter and John came

down from Jerusalem, prayed for the converted ones, laid their hands upon them, "and they received the Holy Ghost." Then they had the conscious possession and enjoyment of the Spirit; but till that came they were incomplete. Paul was converted by the mighty power of Jesus who appeared to Him on the way to Damascus; and yet he had to go to Ananias to receive the Holy Ghost.

Then again, we read that when Peter went to preach to Cornelius, as he preached Christ, "the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word;" which Peter took as the sign that these Gentiles were one with the Jews in the favor of God, having the same baptism.

And so we might go through many of the Epistles, where we find the same truth taught. Look at that wonderful epistle to the Romans. The doctrine of justification by faith is established in the first five chapters. Then in the sixth and seventh, though the believer is represented as dead to sin and the law, and married to Christ, yet a dreadful struggle goes on in the heart of the regenerate man as long as he has not god the full power of the Holy Spirit. But in the eighth chapter, it is the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" that maketh us free from "the law of sin and death." Then we are "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit," with the Spirit of God dwelling in us. All the teaching leads up to the Holy Spirit.

Look again at the epistle to the Galatians. We always talk of this epistle as the great source of instruction on the doctrine of justification by faith: but have you ever noticed how the doctrine of the Holy Spirit holds a most prominent place there? Paul asks the Galatian church:--"Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" It was the hearing of faith that led them to the full enjoyment of the Spirit's power. If they sought to be justified by the works of the law, they had "fallen from grace." "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." And then at the end of the fifth chapter, we are told:--"If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit."

Again, if we go to the epistles to the Corinthians, we find Paul asking the Christians in Corinth:--"Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" If we look into the epistle to the Ephesians, we find the doctrine of the Holy Spirit mentioned twelve times. It is the Spirit that seals God's people; "Ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." He illumines them; "That God may give the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him." Through Christ, both Jew and Gentile "have access by one Spirit unto the Father." They "are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." They are "strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man." With "all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love," they "endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." By not "grieving the Holy Spirit of God," we preserve our sealing to the "day of redemption." Being "filled with the Spirit," we "sing and make melody in our hearts to the Lord," and thus glorify Him. Just study these epistles carefully, and you will find that what I say is true--that the apostle Paul takes great pains to lead Christians to the Holy Ghost as the consummation of the Christian life.

It was the Holy Ghost Who was given to the church at Pentecost; and it is the Holy Ghost Who gives Pentecostal blessings now. It is this power, given to bless men, that wrought such wonderful life, and love, and self-sacrifice in the early church; and it is this that makes us look back to those days as the most beautiful part of the Church's history. And it is the same Spirit of power that must dwell in the hearts of all believers in our day to give the Church its true position. Let us ask God then, that every minister and Christian worker may be endued with the power of the Holy Ghost; that He may search us and try us, and enable us sincerely to answer the question, "Have I known the indwelling and the filling of the Holy Spirit that God wants me to have? Let each one of us ask himself: "Is it my great study to know the Holy Ghost dwelling in me, so that I may help others to yield to the same indwelling of the Holy Spirit; and that He may reveal Christ fully in His divine saving and keeping power?" Will not every one have to confess: "Lord, I have all too little understood this; I have all too little manifested this

in my work and preaching"? Beloved brethren, "The first duty of every clergyman is to humbly ask God that all that he wants done in his hearers may be first fully and truly done in himself." And the second thing is his duty towards those who are awakened and brought to Christ, to lead them on to the full knowledge of the presence and indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Now, if we are indeed to come into full harmony with these two great principles, then there come to us some further questions of the very deepest importance. And the first questions is:--"Why is it that there is in the church of Christ so little practical acknowledgment of the power of the Holy Ghost?" I am not speaking to you, brethren, as if I thought you were not sound in doctrine on this point. I speak to you as believing in the Holy Ghost as the third person in the ever-blessed Trinity. But I speak to you confidently as to those who will readily admit that the truth or the presence and of the power of the Holy Ghost is not acknowledged in the church as it ought to be. Then the question is, Why is it not so acknowledged? I answer because of its spirituality. It is one of the most difficult truths in the Bible for the human mind to comprehend. God has revealed Himself in creation throughout the whole universe. He has revealed Himself in Christ incarnate--and what a subject of study the person, and word, and works of Christ form! But the mysterious indwelling of the Holy Spirit, hidden in the depths of the life of the believer, how much less easy to comprehend!

In the early pentecostal days of the church, this knowledge was intuitive; they possessed the Spirit in power. But soon after the spirit of the world began to creep into the church and mastered it. This was followed by the deeper darkness of formality and superstition in the Roman Catholic Church, when the spirit of the world completely triumphed in what was improperly styled the Church of Christ. The Reformation in the days of Luther restored the truth of justification by faith in Christ; but the doctrine of the Holy Ghost did not then obtain its proper place, for God does not reveal all truth at one time. A great deal of the spirit of the world was still left in the reformed churches; but now God is awakening the church to strive after a fuller scriptural idea of the Holy Spirit's place and power. Through the medium of books, and discussions, and conventions many hearts are being stirred.

Brethren, it is our privilege to take part in this great movement; and let us engage in the work more earnestly than ever. Let each of us say my great work is, in preaching Christ, to lead men to the acknowledging of the Holy Spirit, who alone can glorify Christ. I may try to glorify Christ in my preaching, but it will avail nothing without the Spirit of God. I may urge men to the practice of holiness and every Christian virtue, but all my persuasion will avail very little unless I help them to believe that they must have the Holy Ghost dwelling in them every moment enabling to live the life of Christ. The great reason why the Holy Spirit was given from heaven was to make Christ Jesus' presence manifest to us. While Jesus was incarnate, His disciples were too much under the power of the flesh to allow Christ to get a lodgement in their hearts. It was needful, He said, that He should go away, in order that the Spirit might come; and He promised to those who loved Him and kept His commandments, that with the Spirit, He would come, and the Father would also come, and make Their abode with them. It is thus the Holy Spirit's great work to reveal the Father and the Son in the hearts of God's people. If we believe and teach men that the Holy Spirit can make Christ a reality to them every moment, men will learn to believe and accept Christ's presence and power, of which they now know far too little.

Then another question presents itself, viz., What are we to expect when the Holy Spirit is duly acknowledged and received? I ask this question, because I have frequently noticed something with considerable interest--and, I may say, with some anxiety. I sometimes hear men praying earnestly for a baptism of the Holy Spirit that He may give them power for their work. Beloved brethren, we need this power, not only for work, but for our daily life. Remember, we must have it all the time. In Old Testament times, the Spirit came with power upon the prophets and other inspired men; but He did not dwell permanently in them. In the same way, in the church of the Corinthians, the Holy Spirit came with power to work miraculous gifts, and yet they had but a small measure of His sanctifying grace. You will remember the carnal strife, envying, and divisions there were. They had gifts of

knowledge and wisdom, etc.; but alas! pride, unlovingness, and other sins sadly marred the character of many of them. And what does this teach us? That a man may have a great gift of power for work, but very little of the indwelling Spirit. In 1 Cor. xiii., we are reminded that though we may have faith that would remove mountains, if we have not love, we are nothing. We must have the love that brings the humility and self-sacrifice of Jesus. Don't let us put in the first place the gifts we may possess; if we do, we shall have very little blessing. But we should seek, in the first place, that the Spirit of God should come as a light and power of holiness from the indwelling Jesus. Let the first work of the Holy Spirit be to humble you deep down in the very dust, so that your whole life shall be a tender, broken-hearted waiting on God, in the consciousness of mercy coming from above.

Do not seek large gifts; there is something deeper you need. It is not enough that a tree shoots its branches to the sky, and be covered thickly with leaves; but we want its roots to strike deeply into the soil. Let the thought of the Holy Spirit's being in us, and our hope of being filled with the Spirit, be always accompanied in us with a broken and contrite heart. Let us bow very low before God, in waiting for His grace to fill and to sanctify us. We do not want a power which God might allow us to use, while our inner part is unsanctified. We want God to give us full possession of Himself. In due time, the special gift may come; but we want first and now, the power of the Holy Ghost working something far mightier and more effectual in us than any such gift. We should seek, therefore, not only a baptism of power, but a baptism of holiness; we should seek that the inner nature be sanctified by the indwelling of Jesus, and then other power will come as needed.

There is a third question:--Suppose some one says to me:--"I have given myself up to be filled with the Spirit, and I do not feel that there is any difference in my condition; there is no change of experience that I can speak of. What must I then think? Must not I think that my surrender was not honest?" No, do not think that. "But how then? Does God give no response?" Beloved, God gives a response, but that is not always within certain months or years. "What, then, would you have me do?" Retain the position you have taken before God, and maintain it every day. Say, "Oh God, I have given myself to be filled, here I am an empty vessel, trusting and expecting to be filled by Thee." Take that position every day and every hour. Ask God to write it across your heart. Give up to God an empty, consecrated vessel that He may fill it with the Holy Spirit. Take that position constantly. It may be that you are not fully prepared. Ask God to cleanse you; to give you grace to separate from everything sinful--from unbelief or whatever hindrance there may be. Then take your position before God and say, "My God, Thou art faithful; I have entered into covenant with Thee for Thy Holy Spirit to fill me, and I believe Thou wilt fulfill it." Brethren, I say for myself, and for every minister of the gospel, and for every fellow worker, man or woman, that if we thus come before God with a full surrender, in a bold, believing attitude, God's promise must be fulfilled.

If you were to ask me of my own experience, I would say this:--That there have been times when I hardly knew myself what to think of God's answer to my prayer in this matter; but I have found it my joy and my strength to take and maintain my position, and say: "My God, I have given myself up to Thee. It was Thine own grace that led me to Christ; and I stand before Thee in confidence that Thou wilt keep Thy covenant with me to the end. I am the empty vessel; Thou art the God that fillest all." God is faithful, and He gives the promised blessing in His own time and method. Beloved, for God's sake, be content with nothing less than full health and full spiritual life. "Be filled with the Spirit."

Let me return now to the two expressions with which I began: "the first duty of every clergyman is humbly to ask of God that all that he wants done in those who hear his preaching may be first truly and fully done in himself." Brethren, I ask you, is it not the longing of your hearts to have a congregation of believers filled with the Holy Ghost? Is it not your unceasing prayer for the Church of Christ, in which you minister, that the Spirit of holiness, the very Spirit of God's Son, the spirit of unworldliness and of heavenly-mindedness, may possess it; and that the Spirit of victory and of power over sin may fill its children? If you are willing for that to come, your first duty is to have it yourself.

And then the second sentence:--"the first duty of every clergyman is to lead those who have been brought to Christ to be entirely filled with the Holy Ghost." How can I do my work with success? I can conceive what a privilege it is to be led by the Spirit of God in all that I am doing. In studying my Bible, praying, visiting, organizing, or whatever I am doing, God is willing to guide me by His Holy Spirit. It sometimes becomes a humiliating experience to me that I am unwatchful, and do not wait for the blessing; when that is the case, God can bring me back again. But there is also the blessed experience of God's guiding hand, often through deep darkness, by His Holy Spirit. Let us walk about among the people as men of God, that we may not only preach about a book, and what we believe with our hearts to be true, but may preach what we are and what we have in our own experience. Jesus calls us witnesses for Him; what does that mean? The Holy Ghost brought down to heaven from men a participation in the glory and the joy of the exalted Christ. Peter and the others who spoke with Him were filled with this heavenly Spirit; and thus Christ spoke in them, and accomplished the work for them. O brethren, if you and I be Christ's we should take our places and claim our privilege. We are witnesses to the truth which we believe--witnesses to the reality of what Jesus does and what He is, by His presence in our own souls. If we are willing to be such witnesses for Christ, let us go to our God; let us make confession and surrender, and by faith claim what God has for us as ministers of the gospel and workers in His service. God will prove faithful. Even at this very moment, He will touch our hearts with a deep consciousness of His faithfulness and of His presence; and He will give to every hungering, trustful one that which we continually need.

CONSECRATION

"But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee."

To be able to offer anything to God is a perfect mystery. Consecration is a miracle of grace. "All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee." In these words there are four very precious thoughts I want to try and make clear to you: -

1. God is the Owner of all, and gives all to us.

2. We have nothing but what we receive--but everything we need we may receive from God.

3. It is our privilege and honour to give back to God what we receive from Him.

4. God has a double joy in His possessions when he receives back from us what He gave.

And when I apply this to my life--to my body, to my wealth, property, to my whole being with all its powers--then I understand what Consecration ought to be.

1. It is the glory of God, and His very nature, to be always GIVING. God is the owner of all. There is no power, no riches, no goodness, no love, outside of God. It is the very nature of God, that He does not live for Himself, but for His creatures. His is a love that always delights to give. Here we come to the first step in consecration. I must see that everything I have is given by Him; I must learn to believe in God as the great Owner and Giver of all. Let me hold that fast. I have nothing but what actually and definitely belongs to God. Just as much as people say, "this money in my purse belongs to me," so God is the Proprietor of all. It is His and His only. And it is his life and delight to be always giving. Oh, take that precious thought--there is nothing that God has that He does not want to give. It is His nature, and therefore when God asks you anything, He must give it first Himself, and He will. Never be afraid whatever God asks; for God only asks what is His own; what He asks you to give He will first Himself give you. The Possessor, and Owner, and Giver of all! This is our God. You can apply this to yourself and your powers to all you are and have. Study it, believe it, live in it, every day, every hour, every moment.

2. Just as it is the nature and glory of God to be always giving, it is the nature and glory of man to be always receiving. What did God make us for? We have been made to be each of us a vessel into which God can pour out His life, His beauty, His happiness, His love. We are created to be each a receptacle and a reservoir of divine heavenly life and blessing, just as much as God can put into us. Have we understood this, that our great work--the object of our creation--is to be always receiving? If we fully enter into this, it will teach some precious things. One thing--the utter folly of being proud or conceited. What an idea! Suppose I were to borrow a very beautiful dress, and walk about boasting of it as if it were my own, you might say, "What a fool!" And here it is the Everlasting God owns everything we have; shall we dare to exalt ourselves on account of what is all His? Then what a blessed lesson it will teach us of what our position is! I have to do with a God whose nature is to be always giving, and mine to be always receiving. Just as the lock and key fit each other, God the Giver and I the receiver fit into each other. How often we trouble about things, and about praying for them, instead of going back to the root of things,

and saying, "Lord, I only crave to be the receptacle of what the Will of God means for me; of the power and the gifts and the love and Spirit of God." What can be more simple? Come as a receptacle--cleansed, emptied and humble. Come, and then God will delight to give. If I may with reverence say it, He cannot help Himself; it is His promise, His nature. The blessing is ever flowing out of Him. You know how water always flows into the lowest places. If we would but be emptied and low, nothing but receptacles, what a blessed life we could live! Day by day just praising Him--Thou givest and I accept. Thou bestowest and I rejoice to receive. How many tens of thousands of people have said this morning: "What a beautiful day! Let us throw open the windows and bring in the sunlight with its warmth and cheerfulness!" May our hearts learn every moment to drink in the light and sunshine of God's love.

"Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of Thee, and we have given Thee of Thine own."

3. If God gives all and I receive all, then the third thought is very simple--I must give all back again. What a privilege that for the sake of having me in loving, grateful intercourse with Him, and giving me the happiness of pleasing and serving Him, the Everlasting God should say, "Come now, and bring Me back all that I give." And yet people say, "Oh, but must I give everything back?brother, don't you know that there is no happiness or blessedness except in giving to God! David felt it. He said: "Lord, what an unspeakable privilege it is to be allowed to give that back to Thee which is Thine own!" Just to receive and then to render back in love to Him as God, what He gives. Do you know what God needs you for? People say, "Does not God give us all good gifts to enjoy?" But do you know that the reality of the enjoyment is in the giving back? Just look at Jesus--God gave Him a wonderful body. He kept it holy and gave it as a sacrifice to God. This is the beauty of having a body. God has given you a soul; this is the beauty of having a soul--you can give it back to God. People talk about the difficulty they meet with in having so strong a will. You never can have too strong a will, but the trouble is we do not give that strong will up to God, to make it a vessel in which God can and will pour His Spirit, so as to fit it to do splendid service for Himself.

We have now had the three thoughts: God gives all; I receive all; I give up all. Will you do this now? Will not every heart say, "My God, teach me to give up everything?" Take your head, your mind with all its power of speaking, your property, your heart with its affections--the best and most secret--take gold and silver, everything, and lay it at God's feet and say, "Lord, here is the covenant between me and Thee. Thou delightest to give all, and I delight to give back all." God teach us that. If that simple lesson were learnt, there would be an end of so much trouble about finding out the Will of God, and an end of all our holding back, for it would be written, not upon our foreheads, but across our hearts, "God can do with me what He pleases; I belong to Him with all I have." Instead of always saying to God, "Give, give, give," we should say, "Yes, Lord, Thou dost give, thou dost love to give, and I love to give back." Try that life and find out if it is not the very highest life.

4. God gives all, I receive all, I give all. Now comes the fourth thought: God does so rejoice in what we give to Him. It is not only I that am the receiver and the giver, but God is the Giver and the Receiver too, and, may I say it with reverence, has more pleasure in the receiving back than even in giving. With our little faith we often thing they come back to God again all defiled. God says, "No, they come back beautiful and glorified"; the surrender of the dear child of His, with his aspirations and thanksgivings, brings it to God with a new value and beauty. Ah! child of God you do not know how precious the gift that you bring to your Father, is in His sight. Have I not seen a mother give a piece of cake, and the child comes and offers her a piece to share it with her? How she values the gift! And your God, oh, my friends, your God, His heart, His Father's heart of love, longs, longs, longs to have you give Him everything. It is not a demand. It is a demand, but it is not a demand of a hard Master, it is the call of a loving Father, who knows that every gift you bring to God will bind you closer to Himself, and every surrender you make will open your heart wider to get more of his spiritual gifts. Oh, friends! a gift to God has in

His sight infinite value. It delights Him. He sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied. And it brings unspeakable blessing to you. These are the thoughts our text suggests; now comes the practical application. What are the lessons? We here learn what the true dispositions of the Christian life are.

To be and abide in continual dependence upon God. Become nothing, begin to understand that you are nothing but an earthen vessel into which God will shine down the treasure of His love. Blessed is the man who knows what it is to be nothing, to be just an empty vessel meet for God's use. Work, the Apostle says, for it is God who worketh in you to will and to do. Brethren, come and take tonight the place of deep, deep dependence on God. And then take the place of child-like trust and expectancy. Count upon your God to do for you everything that you can desire of Him. Honour God as a God who gives liberally. Honour God and believe that He asks nothing from you but what he is going first to give. And then come praise and surrender and consecration. Praise Him for it! Let every sacrifice to Him be a thank-offering. What are we going to consecrate? First of all our lives. There are perhaps men and women--young men and women--whose hearts are asking, "What do you want me to do--to say I will be a missionary?" No, indeed, I do not ask you to do this. Deal with God, and come to Him and say, "Lord of all, I belong to Thee, I am absolutely at Thy disposal." Yield up yourselves. There may be many who cannot go as Missionaries, but oh, come, give up yourselves to God all the same to be consecrated to the work of His Kingdom. Let us bow down before Him. Let us give Him all our powers--our head to think for His Kingdom, our heart to go out in love for men, and however feeble you may be, come and say: "Lord, here I am, to live and die for Thy Kingdom. Some talk and pray about the filling of the Holy Spirit. Let them pray more and believe more. But remember the Holy Spirit came to fit men to be messengers of the Kingdom, and you cannot expect to be filled with the Spirit unless you want to live for Christ's Kingdom. You cannot expect all the love and peace and joy of heaven to come into your life and be your treasures, unless you give them up absolutely to the Kingdom of God, and posses and use them only for Him. It is the soul utterly given up to God that will receive in its emptying the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Dear friends we must consecrate not only ourselves--body and soul--but all we have. Some of you may have children; perhaps you have an only child, and you dread the very idea of letting it go. Take care, take care; God deserves your confidence, your love, and your surrender. I plead with you; take your children and say to Jesus: "Anything Lord, that pleases Thee." Educate your children for Jesus. God help you to do it. He may not accept all of them, but He will accept of the will, and there will be a rich blessing in your soul for it. Then there is money. When I hear appeals for money from every Society; when I hear calculations as to what the Christians of England are spending on pleasure, and the small amount given for Missions, I say there is something terrible in it. God's children with so much wealth and comfort, and giving away so small a portion! God be praised for every exception! But there are many who give but very little, who never so give that it costs them something, and they feel it. Oh, friends! our giving must be in proportion to God's giving. He gives you all. Let us take it up in our Consecration prayer: "Lord, take it all, every penny I possess. It is all Thine." Let us often say "It is all His." You may not know how much you ought to give. Give up all, put everything in His hands, and He will teach you if you will wait.

We have heard this precious message from David's mouth. We Christians of the nineteenth century, have we learned to know our God who is willing to give everything? God help us to.

And then the second message. We have nothing that we do not receive, and we may receive everything if we are willing to stand before God and take it.

Thirdly. Whatever you have received from God give it back. It brings a double blessing to your own soul.

Fourthly. Whatever God receives back from us comes to Him in Heaven and gives Him infinite joy and happiness, as he sees His object has been attained. Let us come in the spirit of David, with the spirit of Jesus Christ in us. Let us pray our Consecration Prayer. And may the Blessed Spirit give each of us grace to think and to say the right

thing, and to do what shall be pleasing in the Father's sight.

THE PRAYER LIFE

AN AID TO ITS ATTAINMENT

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Chapter 1

The Sin and Cause of Prayerlessness

If conscience is to do its work, and the contrite heart is to feel its misery, it is necessary that each individual should mention his sin by name. The confession must be severely personal. In a meeting of ministers there is probably no single sin which each one of us ought to acknowledge with deeper shame -'Guilty, verily guilty' - than the sin of prayerlessness.

What is it, then, that makes prayerlessness such a great sin? At first it is looked upon merely as a weakness. There is so much talk about lack of time and all sorts of distractions that the deep guilt of the situation is not recognised. Let it be our honest desire that, for the future, the sin of prayerlessness may be to us truly sinful. Consider

1. What a reproach it is to God

There is the holy and most glorious God who invites us to come to him, to hold converse with him, to ask from him such things as we need, and to experience what a blessing there is in fellowship with him. He has created him we might find our highest glory and salvation.

What use do we make of this heavenly privilege? How many there are who take only five minutes for prayer! They say that they have no time and that the heart desire for prayer is lacking; they do not know how to spend half an hour with God! It is not that they absolutely do not pray; they pray every day - but they have no joy in prayer, as a token of communion with God which shows that God is everything to them.

If a friend comes to visit them, they have time, they make time, even at the cost of sacrifice, for the sake of enjoying converse with him. Yes, they have time for everything that really interests them, but no time to practise fellowship with God and delight themselves in him! They find time for a creature who can be of service to them; but day after day, month after month passes, and there is no time to spend one hour with God.

Do not our hearts begin to acknowledge what a dishonour, what a despite of God this is, that I dare to say I cannot find time for fellowship with him? If this sin begins to appear plain to us, shall we not with deep shame cry out: 'Woe is me, for I am undone, 0 God; be merciful to me, and forgive this awful sin of prayerlessness.' Consider further

2. It is the cause of a deficient spiritual life

It is a proof that, for the most part, our life is still under the power of 'the flesh'. Prayer is the pulse of life; by it the doctor can tell what is the condition of the heart. The sin of prayerlessness is a proof for the ordinary Christian or minister that the life of God in the soul is in deadly sickness and weakness.

Much is said and many complaints are made about the feebleness of the Church to fulfill her calling, to exercise an influence over her members, to deliver them from the power of the world, and to bring them to a life of holy consecration to God. Much is also spoken about her indifference to the millions of heathen whom Christ entrusted to her that she might make known to them his love and salvation. What is the reason that many thousands of Christian workers in the world have not a greater influence? Nothing save this - the prayerlessness of their service. In the midst of all their zeal in the study and in the work of the Church, of all their faithfulness in preaching and

conversation with the people, they lack that ceaseless prayer which has attached to it the sure promise of the Spirit and the power from on high. It is nothing but the sin of prayerlessness which is the cause of the lack of a powerful spiritual life! Consider further

3. The dreadful loss which the Church suffers as a result of the prayerlessness of the minister

It is the business of a minister to train believers up to a life of prayer; but how can a leader do this if he himself understands little the art of conversing with God and of receiving from the Holy Spirit, every day, out of heaven, abundant grace for himself and for his work? A minister cannot lead a congregation higher than he is himself. He cannot with enthusiasm point out a way, or explain a work, in which he is not himself walking or living.

How many thousands of Christians there are who know next to nothing of the blessedness of prayer fellowship with God! How many there are who know something of it and long for a further increase of this knowledge, but in the preaching of the Word they are not persistently urged to keep on till they obtain the blessing! The reason is simply and only that the minister understands so little about the secret of powerful prayer and does not give prayer the place in his service which, in the nature of the case and in the will of God, is indispensably necessary. Oh, what a difference we should notice in our congregations if ministers could be brought to see in its right light the sin of prayerlessness and were delivered from it! Once more consider

4. The impossibility of preaching the gospel to all men-as we are commanded by Christ to do - so long as this sin is not overcome and cast out.

Many feel that the great need of missions is the obtaining of men and women who will give themselves to the Lord to strive in prayer for the salvation of souls. It has also been said that God is eager and able to deliver and bless the world he has redeemed, if his people were but willing, if they were but ready, to cry to him day and night But how can congregations be brought to that unless there comes first an entire change in ministers and that they begin to see that the indispensable thing is not preaching, not pastoral visitation, not church work, but fellowship with God in prayer till they are clothed with power from on high?

Oh, that all thought and work and expectation concerning the kingdom might drive us to the acknowledgement of the sin of prayerlessness! God help us to root it out! God deliver us from it through the blood and power of Christ Jesus! God teach every minister of the Word to see what a glorious place he may occupy if he first of all is delivered from this root of evils; so that with courage and joy, in faith and perseverance, he can go on with his God!

The sin of prayerlessness! The Lord lay the burden of it so heavy on our hearts that we may not rest till it is taken far from us through the name and power of Jesus He will make this possible for us.

A witness from America

In 1898, there were two members of the Presbytery in New York who attended the Northfield Conference for the deepening of the spiritual life. They returned to their work with the fire of a new enthusiasm. They endeavoured to bring about a revival in the entire Pres bytery. In a meeting which they held, the chairman was guided to ask the brethren a question concerning their prayer life: 'Brethren,' said he, 'let us today make confession before God and each other. It will do us good. Will everyone who spends half an hour every day with God in connection with his work hold up a hand?' One hand was held up. He made a further request: 'All who thus spend fifteen minutes hold up a hand.' Not half of the hands were held up. Then he said: 'Prayer, the working power of the Church of Christ,

and half of the workers make hardly any use of it! All who spend five minutes hold up hands.' All hands went up. But one man came later with the confession that he was not quite sure if he spent five minutes in prayer every day. 'It is,' said he, 'a terrible revelation of how little time I spend with God.'

The cause of prayerlessness.

In an elder's prayer meeting, a brother put the question: 'What, then, is the cause of so much prayerlessness? Is it not unbelief?'

The answer was: 'Certainly; but then comes the question what is the cause of that unbelief?' When the disciples asked the Lord Jesus: 'Why could not we cast the devil out?' His answer was: 'Because of your unbelief.' He went further and said: 'Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting' (Matt. 17.19-21). If the life is not one of self-denial - of fasting - that is, letting the world go; of prayer - that is, laying hold of heaven, faith cannot be exercised. A life lived according to the flesh and not according to the Spirit - it is in this that we find the origin of the prayerlessness of which we complain. As we came out of the meeting a brother said to me: 'That is the whole difficulty; we wish to pray in the Spirit and at the same time walk after the flesh, and this is impossible.'

If one is sick and desires healing, it is of prime importance that the true cause of the sickness be discovered. This is always the first step toward recovery. If the particular cause is not recognised, and attention is directed to subordinate causes, or to supposed but not real causes, healing is out of the question. In like manner, it is of the utmost importance for us to obtain a correct insight into the cause of the sad condition of deadness and failure in prayer in the inner chamber, which should be such a blessed place for us. Let us seek to realise fully what is the root of this evil.

Scripture teaches us that there are but two conditions possible for the Christian. One is a walk according to the Spirit, the other a walk according to 'the flesh'. These two powers are in irreconcilable conflict with each other. So it comes to pass, in the case of the majority of Christians, that, while we thank God that they are born again through the Spirit and have received the life of God - yet their ordinary daily life is not lived according to the Spirit but according to 'the flesh'. Paul writes to the Galatians: 'Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?' (Gal. 3.3). Their service lay in fleshly outward performances. They did not understand that where 'the flesh' is permitted to influence their service of God, it soon results in open sin.

So he mentions not only grave sins as the work of 'the flesh', such as adultery, murder, drunkenness; but also the more ordinary sins of daily life - wrath, strife, variance; and he gives the exhortation: 'Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh... If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit' (Gal. 5.16, 25). The Spirit must be honoured not only as the author of a new life but also as the leader and director of our entire walk. Otherwise we are what the apostle calls 'carnal'.

The majority of Christians have little understanding of this matter. They have no real knowledge of the deep sinfulness and godlessness of that carnal nature which belongs to them and to which unconsciously they yield. 'God... condemned sin in the flesh' (Rom. 8.3) - in the cross of Christ. 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts' (Gal. 5.24). 'The flesh' cannot be improved or sanctified. 'The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be' (Rom. 8.7). There is no means of dealing with 'the flesh' save as Christ dealt with it, bearing it to the cross. 'Our old man is crucified with him' (Rom. 6.6); so we by faith also crucify it, and regard and treat it daily as an accursed thing that finds its rightful place on the accursed cross.

It is saddening to consider how many Christians there are who seldom think or speak earnestly about the deep and

immeasurable sinfulness of 'the flesh'-'In me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing'(Rom. 7.18). The man who truly believes this may well cry out: 'I see another law in my members ... bringing me into captivity to the law of sin... 0 wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' (Rom. 7.23, 24). Happy is he who can go further and say: 'I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord... For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death' (Rom. 7.25; 8.2).

Would that we might understand God's counsels of grace for us! 'The flesh' on the cross - the Spirit in the heart and controlling the life.

This spiritual life is too little understood or sought after; yet it is literally what God has promised and will accomplish in those who unconditionally surrender themselves to him for this purpose.

Here then we have the deep root of evil as the cause of a prayerless life. 'The flesh' can say prayers well enough, calling itself religious for so doing and thus satisfying conscience. But 'the flesh' has no desire or strength for the prayer that strives after an intimate knowledge of God; that rejoices in fellowship with him; and that continues to lay hold of his strength. So, finally, it comes to this, 'the flesh' must be denied and crucified.

The Christian who is still carnal has neither disposition nor strength to follow after God. He rests satisfied with the prayer of habit or custom; but the glory, the blessedness of secret prayer is a hidden thing to him, till some day his eyes are opened, and he begins to see that 'the flesh', in its disposition to turn away from God, is the archenemy which makes powerful prayer impossible for him.

I had once, at a conference, spoken on the subject of prayer and made use of strong expressions about the enmity of 'the flesh' as a cause of prayerlessness. After the address, the minister's wife said that she thought 1 had spoken too strongly. She also had to mourn over too little desire for prayer, but she knew her heart was sincerely set on seeking God. 1 showed her what the word of God said about 'the flesh', and that everything which prevents the reception of the Spirit is nothing else than a secret work of 'the flesh'. Adam was created to have fellowship with God and enjoyed it before his fall. After the fall, however, there came immediately, a deep- seated aversion to God, and he fled from him. This incurable aversion is the characteristic of the unregenerate nature and the chief cause of our unwillingness to surrender ourselves to fellowship with God in prayer. The following day she told me that God had opened her eyes; she confessed that the enmity and unwillingness of 'the flesh' was the hidden hindrance in her defective prayer life.

0 my brethren, do not seek to find in circumstances the explanation of this prayerlessness over which we mourn; seek it where God's word declares it to be, in the hidden aversion of the heart to a holy God.

When a Christian does not yield entirely to the leading of the Spirit - and this is certainly the will of God and the work of his grace - he lives, without knowing it, under the power of 'the flesh'. This life of 'the flesh' manifests itself in many different ways. It appears in the hastiness of spirit, or the anger which so unexpectedly arises in you, in the lack of love for which you have so often blamed yourself; in the pleasure found in eating and drinking, about which at times your conscience has chidden you; in that seeking for your own will and honour, that confidence in your own wisdom and power, that pleasure in the world, of which you are sometimes ashamed before God. All this is life 'after the flesh'. 'Ye are yet carnal' (1 Con 3.3) that text, perhaps, disturbs you at times; you have not full peace and joy in God.

I pray you take time and give an answer to the question: Have 1 not found here the cause of my prayerlessness, of my powerlessness to effect any change in the matter? I live in the Spirit, 1 have been born again, but 1 do not walk after the Spirit -'the flesh' lords it over me. The carnal life cannot possibly pray in the spirit and power. God forgive me. The carnal life is evidently the cause of my sad and shameful prayerlessness.

The storm centre on the battlefield

Mention was made in conference of the expression 'strategic position' used so often in reference to the great strife between the kingdom of heaven and the powers of darkness.

When a general chooses the place from which he intends to strike the enemy, he pays most attention to those points which he thinks most important in the fight. Thus there was on the battlefield of Waterloo a farmhouse which Wellington immediately saw was the key to the situation. He did not spare his troops in his endeavours to hold that point: the victory depended on it. So it actually happened. It is the same in the conflict between the believer and the powers of darkness. The inner chamber is the place where the decisive victory is obtained.

The enemy uses all his power to lead the Christian and above all the minister, to neglect prayer. He knows that however admirable the sermon may be, however attractive the service, however faithful the pastoral visitation, none of these things can damage him or his kingdom if prayer is neglected. When the Church shuts herself up to the power of the inner chamber, and the soldiers of the Lord have received on their knees 'power from on high', then the powers of darkness will be shaken and souls will be delivered. In the Church, on the mission field, with the minister and his congregation, everything depends on the faithful exercise of the power of prayer.

In the week of conference I found the following in The Christian:

Two persons quarrel over a certain point. We call them Christian and Apollyon. Apollyon notices that Christian has a certain weapon which would give him a sure victory. They meet in deadly strife, and Apollyon resolves to take away the weapon from his opponent and destroy it. For the moment the main cause of the strife has become subordinate; the great point now is who shall get possession of the weapon on which everything depends? It is of vital importance to get hold of that.

So it is in the conflict between Satan and the believer. God's child can conquer everything by prayer. Is it any wonder that Satan does his utmost to snatch that weapon from the Christian, or to hinder him in the use of it?

How now does Satan hinder prayer? By temptation to postpone or curtail it, by bringing in wandering thoughts and all sorts of distractions; through unbelief and hopelessness. Happy is the prayer hero who, through it all, takes care to hold fast and use his weapon. Like our Lord in Gethsemane, the more violently the enemy attacked the more earnestly he prayed and ceased not till he had obtained the victory. After all the other parts of the armour had been named, Paul adds: 'with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit' (Eph. 6.18). Without prayer, the helmet of salvation, and the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit which is God's word, have no power. All depends on prayer. God teach us to believe and hold this fast!

Chapter 2

The Fight Against Prayerlessness

As soon as the Christian becomes convinced of his sin in this matter, his first thought is that he must begin to strive, with God's help, to gain the victory over it. But alas, he soon experiences that his striving is worth little, and the discouraging thought comes over him, like a wave, that such a life is not for him - he cannot continue faithful! At conferences on the subject of prayer, held during the past years, many a minister has openly said that it seemed impossible for him to attain such a strict life.

Recently I received a letter from a minister, well known for his ability and devotion, in which he writes, 'As far as I am concerned, it does not seem to help me to hear too much about the life of prayer, about the strenuous exertion for which we must prepare ourselves, and about all the time and trouble and endless effort it will cost us. These things discourage me - I have so often heard them. I have time after time put them to the test, and the result has always been sadly disappointing. It does not help me to be told: "You must pray more, and hold a closer watch over yourself, and become altogether a more earnest Christian.

My reply to him was as follows: 'I think in all I spoke at the conference or elsewhere, 1 have never mentioned exertion or struggle, because I am so entirely convinced that our efforts are futile unless we first learn how to abide in Christ by a simple faith.'

My correspondent said further: 'The message I need is this: "See that your relationship to your living Saviour is what it ought to be. Live in his presence, rejoice in his love, rest in him.---A better message could not be given, if it is only rightly understood. 'See that your relationship to the living Saviour is what it ought to be.' But this is just what will certainly make it possible for one to live the life of prayer.

We must not comfort ourselves with the thought of standing in a right relationship to the Lord Jesus while the sin of prayerlessness has power over us, and while we, along with the whole Church, have to complain about our feeble life which makes us unfit to pray for ourselves, for the Church, or for missions, as we ought. But if we recognise, in the first place, that a right relationship to the Lord Jesus, above all else, includes prayer, with both the desire and power to pray according to God's will, then we have something which gives us the right to rejoice in him and to rest in him.

I have related this incident to point out how naturally discouragement will be the result of self-effort and will so shut out all hope of improvement or victory. And this indeed is the condition of many Christians when called on to persevere in prayer as intercessors. They feel it is certainly something entirely beyond their reach - they have not the power for the self-sacrifice and consecration necessary for such prayer; they shrink from the effort and struggle which will, as they suppose, make them unhappy. They have tried in the power of the flesh to conquer the flesh - a wholly impossible thing. They have endeavoured by BeeIzebub to cast out BeeIzebub and this can never happen. It is Jesus alone who can subdue the flesh and the devil.

We have spoken of a struggle which will certainly result in disappointment and discouragement. This is the effort made in our own strength. But there is another struggle which will certainly lead to victory. The Scripture speaks of 'the good fight of faith', that is to say, a fight which springs from and is carried on by faith. We must get right conceptions about faith and stand fast in our faith. Jesus Christ is ever the author and finisher of faith. It is when we come into right relationship with him that we can be sure of the help and power he bestows. Just, then, as earnestly as we must, in the first place. say: 'Do not strive in your own strength; cast yourself at the feet of the

Lord Jesus, and wait upon him in the sure confidence that he is with you, and works in you'; so do we, in the second place, say: 'Strive in prayer; let faith fill your heart - so will you be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.'

An illustration will help us to understand this. A devoted Christian woman who conducted a large Bible class with zeal and success once came in trouble to her minister. In her earlier years she had enjoyed much blessing in the inner chamber, in fellowship with the Lord and his word. But this had gradually been lost and, do what she would, she could not get right. The Lord had blessed her work, but the joy had gone out of her life. The minister asked what she had done to regain the lost blessedness. 'I have done everything,' said she, 'that 1 can think of, but all in vain.'

He then questioned her about her experience in connection with her conversion. She gave an immediate and clear answer: 'At first I spared no pains in my attempt to become better, and to free myself from sin, but it was all useless. At last 1 began to understand that I must lay aside all my efforts, and simply trust the Lord Jesus to bestow on me his life and peace, and he did it.'

'Why then,' said the minister, 'do you not try this again? As you go to your inner chamber, however cold and dark your heart may be, do not try in your own might to force yourself into the right attitude. Bow before him, and tell him that he sees in what a sad state you are that your only hope is in him. Trust him with a childlike trust to have mercy upon you, and wait upon him. In such a trust you are in a right relationship to him. You have nothing he has everything.' Some time later she told the minister that his advice had helped her; she had learned that faith in the love of the Lord Jesus is the only method of getting into fellowship with God in prayer.

Do you not begin to see, my reader, that there are two kinds of warfare - the first when we seek to conquer prayerlessness in our own strength. In that case, my advice to you is: 'Give over your restlessness and effort; fall helpless at the feet of the Lord Jesus; he will speak the word, and your soul will live.' If you have done this, then, second, comes the message: 'This is but the beginning of everything. It will require deep earnestness, and the exercise of all your power, and a watchfulness of the entire heart - eager to detect the least backsliding. Above all, it will require a surrender to a life of self sacrifice that God really desires to see in us and which he will work out for us.'

Chapter 3

How To Be Delivered from Prayerlessness; How Deliverance May Continue

The greatest stumbling-block in the way of victory over prayerlessness is the secret feeling that we shall never obtain the blessing of being delivered from it. Often have we put forth effort in this direction, but in vain. Old habit and the power of the flesh, our surroundings with their attractions, have been too strong for us. What good is it to attempt that which our heart assures us is out of our reach? The change needed in the entire life is too great and too difficult. If the question is put: 'Is a change possible?' our sighing heart says: 'Alas, for me it is entirely impossible!' Do you know why that reply comes? It is simply because you have received the call to prayer as the voice of Moses and as a command of the law. Moses and his law have never yet given anyone the power to obey.

Do you really long for the courage to believe that deliverance from a prayerless life is possible for you and may become a reality? Then you must learn the great lesson that such a deliverance is included in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, that it is one of the blessings of the New Covenant which God himself will impart to you through Christ Jesus. As you begin to understand this you will find that the exhortation, 'Pray without ceasing', conveys a new meaning. Hope begins to spring up in your heart that the Spirit - who has been bestowed on you to cry constantly, 'Abba, Father'- will make a true life of prayer possible for you. Then you will hearken, not in the spirit of discouragement, but in the gladness of hope, to the voice that calls you to repentance.

Many a one has turned to his inner chamber, under bitter selfaccusation that he has prayed so little, and has resolved for the future to live in a different manner. Yet no blessing has come - there was not the strength to continue faithful, and the call to repentance had no power, because his eyes had not been fixed on the Lord Jesus, If he had only understood, he would have said: 'Lord, thou seest how cold and dark my heart is: 1 know that 1 must pray, but I feel 1 cannot do so; 1 lack the urgency and desire to pray.'

He did not know that at that moment the Lord Jesus in his tender love was looking down upon him and saying: 'You cannot pray; you feel that all is cold and dark: why not give yourself over into my hands? Only believe that I am ready to help you in prayer; I long greatly to shed abroad my love in your heart, so that you, in the consciousness of weakness, may confidently rely on me to bestow the grace of prayer. Just as 1 will cleanse you from all other sins, so also will 1 deliver from the sin o prayerlessness - only do not seek the victory in your own strength. Bow before me as one who expects everythin from his Saviour. Let your soul keep silence before me however sad you feel your state to be. Be assured of thi - I will teach you how to pray.'

Many a one will acknowledge: 'I see my mistake; I had not thought that the Lord Jesus must deliver and cleans me from this sin also. I had not understood that he wa with me every day in the inner chamber, in his great lov ready to keep and bless me, however sinful and guilty felt myself to be. 1 had not supposed that just as he will give all other grace in answer to prayer, so, above all and before all, he will bestow the grace of a praying heart. What folly to think that all other blessings must come from him, but that prayer, whereon everything else depends, must be obtained by personal effort! Thank God I begin to comprehend - the Lord Jesus is himself in the inner chamber watching over me, and holding himself responsible to teach me how to approach the Father. This only he demands - that I, with childlike confidence, wait upon him and glorify him.'

Brethren, have we not seriously forgotten this truth? From a defective spiritual life nothing better can be expected than a defective prayer life. It is vain for us, with our defective spiritual life, to endeavour to pray more or better. It is an impossibility. Nothing less is necessary than that we should experience that he who'is in Christ Jesus is a

new creature: old things have passed away; behold, all things are become new.' This is literally true for the man who understands and experiences what it is to be in Jesus Christ.

Our whole relationship to the Lord Jesus must be a new thing. I must believe in his infinite love, which really longs to have communion with me every moment and to keep me in the enjoyment of his fellowship. I must believe in his divine power, which has conquered sin and will truly keep me from it. I must believe in him who, as the great intercessor, through the Spirit, will inspire each member of his body with joy and power for communion with God in prayer. My prayer life must be brought entirely under the control of Christ and his love. Then, for the first time, will prayer become what it really is, the natural and joyous breathing of the spiritual life, by which the heavenly atmosphere is inhaled and then exhaled in prayer.

Do you not see that, just as this faith possesses us, the call to a life of prayer which pleases God will be a welcome call? The cry, 'Repent of the sin of prayerlessness', will not be responded to by a sigh of helplessness, or by the unwillingness of the flesh. The voice of the Father will be heard as he sets before us a widely opened door and receives us into blessed fellowship with himself. Prayer for the help of the Spirit to pray will no longer be in fear of an effort too great for our power; it will be but falling down in utter weakness at the feet of the Lord Jesus, to find there that victory comes through the might and love which stream from his countenance.

If the question arises in our mind: 'will this continue?' and the fear comes: `You know how often you have tried and been disappointed', faith will find its strength, not in the thought of what you will, or do, but in the changeless faithfulness and love of Christ, who afresh has succoured you and assured you that those who wait on him shall not be ashamed.

If fear and hesitation still remain, I pray you by the mercies of God in Jesus Christ, and by the unspeakable faithfulness of his tender love, dare to cast yourselves at his feet. Only believe with your whole heart that there is deliverance from the sin of prayerlessness. `If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness' (1 John 1.9). In his blood and grace there is complete deliverance from all unrighteousness and from all prayerlessness, Praised be his name for ever!

How deliverance from prayerlessness may continue

What we have said about deliverance from the sin of prayerlessness has also application as answer to the question: `How may the experience of deliverance be maintained?' Redemption is not granted to us piecemeal, or as something of which we may make use from time to time. It is bestowed as a fullness of grace stored up in the Lord Jesus, which may be enjoyed in a new fellowship with him every day. It is so necessary that this great truth should be driven home and fastened in our minds that I will once more mention it. Nothing can preserve you from carelessness, or make it possible for you to persevere in living, powerful prayer, but a daily close fellowship with Jesus our Lord.

He said to his disciples: 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me... Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me ...He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do' (John 14.1, 11, 12).

The Lord wished to teach his disciples that all they had learned from the Old Testament concerning the power and holiness and love of God must now be transferred to him. They must not believe merely in certain written documents but in him personally. They must believe that he was in the Father, and the Father in him, in such a sense that they had one life, one glory. All that they knew about Christ they would find in God. He laid much emphasis on this because it was only through such a faith in him and his divine glory that they could do the works

which he did, or even greater works. This faith would lead them to know that just as Christ and the Father are one, so also they were in Christ and Christ was in them.

It is this intimate, spiritual, personal, uninterrupted relationship to the Lord Jesus which manifests itself powerfully in our lives, and especially in our prayer lives. Let us consider this and see what it means: that all the glorious attributes of God are in our Lord Jesus Christ. Think of-

1. God's omnipresence

God fills the world and every moment is present in everything. Just as it is with the Father, so now our Lord Jesus is everywhere present, above all with each of his redeemed ones. This is one of the greatest and most important lessons which our faith must learn. We can clearly understand this from the example of our Lord's disciples. What was the peculiar privilege of the disciples, who were always in fellowship with him? It was uninterrupted enjoyment of the presence of the Lord Jesus. It was because of this they were so sorrowful at the thought of his death. They would be deprived of that presence. He would be no longer with them. How, under these circumstances, did the Lord Jesus comfort them? He promised that the Holy Spirit from heaven should so work in them a sense of the fullness of his life and of his personal presence that he would be even more intimately near and have more unbroken fellowship with them than ever they experienced while he was upon earth.

This great promise is now the inheritance of every believer, although so many of them know little about it. Jesus Christ, in his divine personality, in that eternal love which led him to the cross, longs to have fellowship with us every moment of the day and to keep us in the enjoyment of that fellowship. This ought to be explained to every new convert: 'The Lord loves you so that he would have you near him without a break, that you may have experience of his love.' This is what every believer must learn who has felt his powerlessness for a life of prayer, of obedience, and of holiness. This alone will give us power as intercessors to conquer the world and to win souls out of it for our Lord.

2. The omnipotence of God

How wonderful is God's power! We see it in creation; we see it in the wonders of redemption recorded in the Old Testament. We see it in the wonderful works of Christ which the Father wrought in him, and above all in his resurrection from the dead. We are called on to believe in the Son, just as we believe in the Father. Yes, the Lord Jesus who, in his love, is so unspeakably near us, is the almighty one with whom nothing is impossible. Whatever may be in our hearts or flesh, which will not submit to us, he can and will conquer. Everything that is promised in God's word, all that is our inheritance as children of the New Covenant, the almighty Jesus can bestow upon us. If I bow before him in my inner chamber, then I am in contact with the eternal, unchanging power of God. If 1 commit myself for the day to the Lord Jesus, then I may rest assured that it is his eternal almighty power which has taken me under its protection and which will accomplish everything for me.

Oh, if we would only take time for the inner chamber so that we might experience in full reality the presence of this almighty Jesus! What a blessedness would be ours through faith! An unbroken fellowship with an omnipresent and almighty Lord.

3. The holy love of God

This means that he, with his whole heart, offers all his divine attributes for our service and is prepared to impart himself to us. Christ is the revelation of his love. He is the Son of his love - the gift of his love - the power of his

love; and this Jesus, who has sought on the cross to give an overwhelming proof of his love in his death and blood-shedding, so as to make it impossible for us not to believe in that love - this Jesus is he who comes to meet us in the inner chamber, and gives the positive assurance that unbroken fellowship with him is our inheritance, and will, through him, become our experience. The holy love of God which sacrificed everything to conquer sin and bring it to naught, comes to us in Christ to save us from every sin.

Brethren, take time to think over that word of our Lord: 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me'...Believe me that I am in the Father ... and ye in me, and I in you' (John 14. 1, 11, 20). That is the secret of the life of prayer. Take time in the inner chamber to bow down and worship; and wait on him till he unveils himself, and takes possession of you, and goes out with you to show how a man may live and walk in abiding fellowship with an unseen Lord.

Do you long to know how you may always experience deliverance from the sin of prayerlessness? Here you have the secret. Believe in the Son of God, give him time in the inner chamber to reveal himself in his ever present nearness, as the eternal and almighty one, the eternal love who watches over you. You will experience what, up till now, you have perhaps not known - that it has not entered into the heart of man what God can do for those who love him.

Chapter 4

The Blessing of Victory; The More Abundant Life

If now we are delivered from the sin of prayerlessness, and understand how this deliverance may continue to be experienced, what will be the fruit of our liberty? He who sees this aright will, with renewed earnestness and perseverance, seek after this liberty. His life and experience will indeed be an evidence that he has obtained something of unspeakable worth. He will be a living witness of the blessing which victory has brought.

Consider -

1. The blessedness of unbroken fellowship with God

Think of the confidence in the Father which will take the place of the reproach and self-condemnation which was the earlier characteristic of our lives. Think of the deep consciousness that God's almighty grace has effected something in us, to prove that we really bear his image and are fitted for a life of communion with him and prepared to glorify him. Think how we, notwithstanding our conviction of our nothingness, may live as true children of a King, in communion with their Father, and may manifest something of the character of our Lord Jesus in the holy fellowship with his Father which he had when on earth. Think how in the inner chamber the hour of prayer may become the happiest time in the whole do for us, and how God may use us to take a share in the carrying out of his plans, and make us fountains of blessing for the world around us.

2. The power which we may have for the work to which we are called

The preacher will learn to receive his message really from God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, and t deliver it in that power to the congregation. He will know where he can be filled with the love and zeal which will enable him, in his rounds of pastoral visiting, t meet and help each individual in a spirit of tender com passion. He will be able to say with Paul: 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me' (Ph 4.13). 'We are more than conquerors through him th loved us' (Rom. 8.37). 'We are ambassadors for Christ ... we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconcil to God' (2 Cor. 5.20). These are no vain dreams or p tures of a foolish imagination. God has given us Paul an illustration, so that, however we may differ from him in gifts or calling, yet in inner experience we may know the all-sufficiency of grace which can do all things for as it did for him.

3. The prospect which opens before us for the future

This is to be consecrated to take part as intercessors in great work of bearing on our hearts the need of the en Church and world. Paul sought to arouse men to pray all saints, and he tells us what a conflict he had for th who had not yet seen his face. In his personal prese he was subject to conditions of time and place, but in Spirit he had power in the name of Christ to pray blessing on those who had not yet heard of the Saviour.

In addition to his life in connection with men here on earth, far or near, he lived another, a heavenly life - one of love and of a wonderful power in prayer which he continually exercised. We can hardly form a conception of the power God will bestow, if only we get freed from the sin of prayerlessness and pray with the daring which reaches heaven and brings down blessing in the almighty name of Christ.

What a prospect! Minister and missionaries brought by God's grace to pray, let us say twice as much as formerly, with twofold faith and joy! What a difference it would make in the preaching, in the prayer meeting, in the fellowship with others! What a gentle power would come down in an inner chamber, sanctified by communion with God and his love in Christ! What an influence would be exercised on believers, in urging them forward to the work of intercession! How greatly would this influence be felt in the Church and among the heathen! What power might be exercised over ministers of other churches, and who knows how God might use us for his Church through the whole world! Is it not worth while to sacrifice everything, and to beseech God without ceasing to give us real and full victory over the prayerlessness which has covered us with such shame?

Why do I now write these things and extol so highly the blessedness of victory over'the sin which doth so easily beset us' and which has so terribly robbed us of the power which God has intended for us? I can give an answer. I know all too well what low thoughts we have concerning the promises and the power of God and how prone we are always to backslide, to limit God's power, and to deem it impossible for him to do greater things than we have seen. It is a glorious thing to get to know God in a new way in the inner chamber. That, however, is but the beginning. It is something still greater and more glorious to know God as the allsufficient One and to wait on his Spirit to open our hearts and minds wide to receive the great things, the new things which he really longs to bestow on those who wait for him.

God's object is to encourage faith and to make his children and servants see that they must take trouble to understand and rely upon the unspeakable greatness and omnipotence of God, so that they may take literally and in a childlike spirit this word: 'Unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think ... be glory ... throughout all ages' (Eph. 3.20, 21). Oh, that we knew what a great and glorious God we have!

Someone may ask: 'May not this note of certain victory become a snare and lead to levity and pride?' Undoubtedly. That which is the highest and best on earth is always liable to abuse. How, then, can we be saved from this? Through nothing so surely as through true prayer, which brings us really into contact with God. The holiness of God, sought for in persistent prayer, will cover our sinfulness. The omnipotence an greatness of God will make us feel our nothingness. Fellowship with God in Jesus Christ will lead us to the experience that there is in us no good thing, and that we can have fellowship with God only as our faith become a humbling of ourselves as Christ humbled himself, an we truly live in him as he is in the Father.

Prayer is not merely coming to God to ask something from him. It is above all fellowship with God and being brought under the power of his holiness and love, till he takes possession of us and stamps our entire nature with the lowliness of Christ, which is the secret of all true worship.

Yes, it is in Christ Jesus that we draw near to the Father, as those who have died with Christ and have entirely done with their own life, as those in whom lives and whom he enables to say: 'Christ liveth in m What we have said about the work that the Lord Jesus does in us to deliver us from prayerlessness is true not only of the beginning of the life of prayer, and of the joy which a new experience of power to pray causes us, it true for the whole life of prayer all the day lot 'Through him' we have access to the Father. In this always, as in the whole spiritual life, 'Christ is all. ''They saw no man save Jesus only' (Matt. 17.8).

May God strengthen us to a belief that there is certain victory prepared for us, and that the blessing will be what the heart of man has not conceived! God will do this for those who love him.

This does not come to us all at once. God has great patience with his children. He bears with us in our slow progress with fatherly patience. Let each child of God rejoice in all that God's word promises. The stronger our faith, the more earnestly will we persevere to the end.

The more abundant life

Our Lord spoke this word concerning the more abundant life when he said that he had come to give his life for his sheep: 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly' (John 10. 10). A man may have life, and yet, through lack of nourishment, or through illness, there may be no abundance of life or power. This was the distinction between the Old Testament and the New. In the former there was indeed life, under the law, but not the abundance of grace of the New Testament. Christ had given life to his disciples, but they could receive the abundant life only through his resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

All true Christians have received life from Christ. The greater portion of them, however, know nothing about the more abundant life which he is willing to bestow. Paul speaks constantly of this. He says about himself that the grace of God was 'exceeding abundant' (1 Tim. 1.14). '1 can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me' (Phil. 4.13). 'Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ' (2. Cor. 2.14). 'We are more than conquerors through him that loved us' (Rom. 8.37).

We have spoken of the sin of prayerlessness, and the means of deliverance, and how to be kept free from that sin. What has been said on these points is all included in that expression of Christ: 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' It is of the utmost importance for us so to understand this more abundant life, that we may clearly see that for a true life of prayer nothing less is necessary than that we should walk in an ever increasing experience of that overflowing life.

It is possible for us to commence this conflict against prayerlessness in dependence on Christ, and looking to him to be assisted and kept in it, and yet to be disappointed. This is the case when prayerlessness is looked upon as the one sin against which we must strive. It must be recognised as part of the whole life of the flesh and as closely connected with other sins which spring from the same source. We forget that the entire flesh with all its affections, whether manifested in the body or soul, must be regarded as crucified, and be handed over to death. We must not be satisfied with a feeble life, but must seek for an abundant life. We must surrender ourselves entirely, that the Spirit may take full possession of us, so manifesting that life in us that there may come an entire transformation in our spiritual being, by which the cornplete mastery of Christ and the Spirit is recognised.

What is it, then, which peculiarly constitutes this abundant life? We cannot too often repeat, or in different ways too often set it forth - the abundant life is nothing less than the full Jesus having the full mastery over our entire being, through the power of the Holy Spirit. As the Spirit makes known in us the fullness of Christ, and the abundant life which he gives, it will be chiefly in three aspects:

1. As the crucified one

Not merely as the one who died for us, to atone for our sins; but as he who has taken us up with himself on the cross to die with him, and who now works out in us the power of his cross and death. You have the true fellowship with Christ when you can say: 'I have been crucified with Christ - he, the crucified one, lives in me.' The feelings and the disposition which were in him, his lowliness and obedience even to the death of the cross - these were what he referred to when he said of the Holy Spirit: 'He shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you' (John 16.15) - not as an instruction, but as childlike participation of the same life which was in him.

Do you desire that the Holy Spirit should take full possession of you, so as to cause the crucified Christ to dwell in you? Understand then, that this is just the end for which he has been given, and this he will surely accomplish in all who yield themselves to him.

2. As the risen one

The Scripture frequently mentions the resurrection in connection with the wonder-working power of God, by which Christ was raised from the dead; and from which comes the assurance of 'the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead' (Eph. 1.19, 20). Do not pass hastily from these words. Turn back and read them once more, and learn the great lesson that, however powerless and weak you feel, the omnipotence of God is working in you; and, if you only believe, will give you in daily life a share in the resurrection of his Son.

Yes, the Holy Spirit can fill you with the joy and victory of the resurrection of Christ, as the power of your daily life, here in the midst of the trials and temptations of this world. Let the cross humble you to death. God will work out the heavenly life in you through his Spirit. Ah, how little have we understood that it is entirely the work of the Holy Spirit to make us partakers of the crucified and risen Christ, and to conform us to his life and death!

3. As the glorified one

The glorified Christ is he who baptises with the Holy Spirit. When the Lord Jesus himself was baptised with the Spirit, it was because he had humbled himself and offered himself to take part in John's baptism of repentance - a baptism for sinners - in Jordan. Even so, when he took upon himself the work of redemption, he received the Holy Spirit to fit him for his work from that hour till on the cross he 'offered himself without spot to God' (Heb. 9.14). Do you desire that this glorified Christ should baptise you with the Holy Spirit? Offer yourself then to him for his service, to further his great work of making known to sinners the love of the Father.

God help us to understand what a great thing it is to receive the Holy Spirit with power from the glorified Jesus! It means a willingness - a longing of the soul - to work for him, and, if need be, to suffer for him. You have known and loved your Lord, and have worked for him, and have had blessing in that work; but the Lord has more than that to bestow. He can so work in us, and in our brethren around us, and in the ministers of the church, by the power of the Holy Spirit, as to fill our hearts with adoring wonder.

Have you laid hold of it, my reader? The abundant life is neither more nor less than the full life of Christ as the crucified, the risen, the glorified one, who baptises with the Holy Ghost and reveals himself in our hearts and lives as Lord of all within us.

I read not long since an expression - 'Live in what must be. 'Do not live in your human imagination of what is possible. Live in the word - in the love and infinite faithfulness of the Lord Jesus. Even though it is slow, and with many a stumble, the faith that always thanks him not for experiences, but for the promises on which it can rely - goes on from strength to strength, still increasing in the blessed assurance that God himself will perfect his work in us.

Chapter 5

The Example of Our Lord

The connection between the prayer life and the Spirit life is close and indissoluble. It is not merely that we receive the Spirit through prayer, but the Spirit life requires, as an indispensable thing, a continuous prayer life. I can be led continually by the Spirit only as I continually give myself to prayer.

This was very evident in the life of our Lord. A study of his life will give us a wonderful view of the power and holiness of prayer. Consider his baptism. It was when he was baptised and prayed that heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit came down upon him. God desired to crown Christ's surrender of himself to the sinner's baptism in Jordan (which was also a surrender of himself to the sinner's death), with the gift of the Spirit for the work that he must accomplish. But this could not have taken place had he not prayed. In the fellowship of worship the Spirit was bestowed on him to lead him out into the desert to spend forty days there in prayer and fasting. Turn to Mark 1.32-35: 'And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. And all the city was gathered together at the door... And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.'

The work of the day and evening had exhausted him. In his healing of the sick and casting out devils, power had gone out of him. While others still slept, he went away to pray and to renew his strength in communion with his Father, He had need of this, otherwise he would not have been ready for the new day. The holy work of delivering souls demands constant renewal through fellowship with God.

Think again of the calling of the apostles as given in Luke 6.12,13-. 'And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles.' Is it not clear that if anyone wishes to do God's work, he must take time for fellowship with him, to receive his wisdom and power? The dependence and helplessness of which this is an evidence, open the way and give God the opportunity of revealing his power. How great was the importance of the choosing of the apostles for Christ's own work, for the early Church, and for all time! It had God's blessing and seal; the stamp of prayer was on it.

Read Luke 9.18, 20: 'And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them saying, Whom say the people that I am? ... Peter answering said, The Christ of God.' The Lord had prayed that the Father might reveal to them who he was. It was in answer to prayer that 'he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles'. And when Peter said: 'The Christ of God' the Lord said to him, 'Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven' (Matt. 16.17). This great confession was the fruit of prayer.

Read further Luke 9.28-35: 'He took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered ... And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.' Christ had desired that, for the strengthening of their faith, God might give them an assurance from heaven that he was the Son of God. Prayer obtained for our Lord Jesus himself, as well as for his disciples, what happened on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Does it not become still more clear that what God wills to accomplish on earth needs prayer as its indispensable condition? And there is but one way for Christ and believers. A heart and mouth open toward heaven in believing prayer will certainly not be put to shame.

Read Luke 11. 1-13: 'As he was praying in a certain plain, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray...' And then he gave them that inexhaustible prayer: 'Our Father who art in heaven'. In this he showed what was going on in his heart, when he prayed that God's name might be hallowed, and his kingdom come, and his will be done, and all of this 'on earth as it is in heaven'. How will this ever come to pass? Through prayer. This prayer has been uttered through the ages by countless millions, to their unspeakable comfort. But forget not this - it was born out of the prayer of our Lord Jesus. He had been praying, and therefore was able to give that glorious answer.

Read John 14.16: '1 will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter. 'The entire dispensation of the New Testament, with the wonderful outpouring of the Holy Spirit, is the outcome of the prayer of the Lord Jesus. It is as though God had impressed on the gift of the Holy Spirit this seal - in answer to the prayer of the Lord Jesus, and later of his disciples, the Holy Spirit will surely come. But it will be in answer to prayer like that of our Lord, in which he took time to be alone with God and in that prayer offered himself wholly to God.

Read John 17, the high priestly, most holy prayer! Here the Son prays first for himself, that the Father will glorify him by giving him power for the cross, by raising him from the dead, by setting him at his right hand. These great things could not take place save through prayer. Prayer had power to obtain them.

Afterward he prayed for his disciples, that the Father might preserve them from the evil one, might keep them from the world, and might sanctify them. And then, further, he prayed for all those who through their word might believe on him, that all might be one in love, even as the Father and the Son were one. This prayer gives us a glimpse into the wonderful relationship between the Father and the Son, and teaches us, that all the blessings of heaven come continually through the prayer of him who is at God's fight hand and ever prays for us. But it teaches us, also, that all these blessings must in the same manner be desired and asked for by us. The whole nature and glory of God's blessings consist in this - they must be obtained in answer to prayer, by hearts entirely surrendered to him, and hearts that believe in the power of prayer.

Now we come to the most remarkable instance of all. In Gethsemane we see that our Lord, according to his constant habit, consulted and arranged with the Father the work he had to do on earth. First he besought him in agony and bloody sweat to let the cup pass from him; when he understood that this could not be, then he prayed for strength to drink it, and surrendered himself with the words: 'Thy will be done.' He was able to meet the enemy full of courage and in the power of God gave himself over to the death of the cross. He had prayed.

Oh, why is it that God's children have so little faith in the glory of prayer, as the great power for subjecting our own wills to that of God, as well as for the confident carrying out of the work of God in spite of our great weakness? Would that we might learn from our Lord Jesus how impossible it is to walk with God, to obtain God's blessing or leading, or to do his work joyously and fruitfully, apart from close unbroken fellowship with him who is ever a living fountain of spiritual life and power!

Let every Christian think over this simple study of the prayer life of our Lord Jesus and endeavour from God's word, with prayer for the leading of the Holy Spirit, to learn what the life is which the Lord Jesus Christ bestows upon him and supports in him. It is nothing else than a life of daily prayer. Let each minister especially recognise how entirely vain it is to attempt to do the work of our Lord in any other way than that in which he did it. Let us, as workers, begin to believe that we are set free from the ordinary business of the world, that we may, above everything, have time, in our Saviour's name, and with his Spirit, and in oneness with him, to ask for and obtain blessing for the world.

Chapter 6

The Holy Spirit and Prayer

Is it not sad that our thoughts about the Holy Spirit are so often coupled with grief and self-reproach? Yet he bears the name of Comforter, and is given to lead us to find in Christ our chief delight and joy. But there is something still more sad: he who dwells within us to comfort us is often grieved by us because we will not permit him to accomplish his work of love. What a cause of inexpressible pain to the Holy Spirit is all this prayerlessness in the Church! It is the cause also of the low vitality and utter impotence which are so often found in us, because we are not prepared to permit the Holy Spirit to lead us.

God grant that our meditation on the work of the Holy Spirit may be matter for rejoicing and for the strengthening of our faith!

The Holy Spirit is 'the Spirit of prayer'. He is definitely called by this name in Zechariah 12, 10: 'The spirit of grace and of supplications. 'Twice in Paul's epistles there is a remarkable reference to him in the matter of prayer. 'Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father' (Rom. 8.15). 'God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father' (Gal. 4.6). Have you ever meditated on these words: 'Abba, Father'? In that name our Saviour offered his greatest prayer to the Father, accompanied by the entire surrender and sacrifice of his life and love. The Holy Spirit is given for the express purpose of teaching us, from the very beginning of our Christian life onward, to utter that word in childlike trust and surrender. In one of these passages we read: 'We cry'; in the other: 'He cries.' What a wonderful blending of the divine and human cooperation in prayer. What a proof that God - if I may say so - has done his utmost to make prayer as natural and effectual as though it were the cry of a child to an earthly Father, as he says: 'Abba, Father'.

Is it not a proof that the Holy Spirit is to a great extent a stranger in the Church, when prayer, for which God has made such provisions, is regarded as a task and a burden? And does not this teach us to seek for the deep root of prayerlessness in our ignorance of, and disobedience to, the divine instructor whom the Father has commissioned to teach us to pray?

If we desire to understand this truth still more clearly we must notice what is written in Romans 8.26, 27: 'Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.' Is it not clear from this that the Christian if left to himself does not know how to pray; or how he ought to pray; and that God has stooped to meet us in this helplessness of ours by giving us the Holy Spirit himself to pray for us; and that his operation is deeper than our thought or feeling, but is noticed and answered by God?

Our first work, therefore, ought to be to come into God's presence not with our ignorant prayers, not with many words and thoughts, but in the confidence that the divine work of the Holy Spirit is being carried on within us. This confidence will encourage reverence and quietness, and will also enable us, in dependence on the help which the Spirit gives, to lay our desires and heart-needs before God. The great lesson for every prayer is - see to it, first of all, that you commit yourself to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and with entire dependence on him, give him the first place; for through him your prayer will have a value you cannot imagine, and through him also you will learn to speak out your desires in the name of Christ.

What a protection this faith would be against deadness and despondency in the inner chamber! Only think of it! In

every prayer the triune God takes a part - the Father who hears: the Son in whose name we pray; the Spirit who prays for us and in us. How important it is that we should be in right relationship to the Holy Spirit and understand his work!

The following points demand serious consideration.

1. Let us firmly believe, as a divine reality, that the Spirit of God's Son, the Holy Spirit, is in us. Do not imagine that you know this and have no need to consider it. It is a thought so great and divine that it can gain an entrance to our hearts and be retained there only by the Holy Spirit himself. 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our - spirit' (Rom. 8.16). Our position ought to be that of reckoning with full assurance of faith that our heart is his temple, yes, that he dwells within us and rules soul and body. Let us thank God heartily as often as we pray, that we have his Spirit in us to teach us to pray. Thanksgiving will draw our hearts out to God and keep us engaged with him; it will take our attention from ourselves and give the Spirit room in our hearts.

Oh, it is no wonder that we have been prayerless, and have felt this work too heavy for us, if we have sought to hold fellowship with the eternal God apart from his Spirit, who reveals the Father and the Son.

2. In the practice of this faith in the certainty that the Spirit dwells and works in us, there must also be the understanding of all that he desires to accomplish in us. His work in prayer is closely connected with his other work. We have seen in an earlier chapter that his first and greatest work is to reveal Christ in his omnipresent love and power. So the Holy Spirit will in prayer constantly remind us of Christ, of his blood and name, as the sure ground of our being heard.

He will, further, as 'the Spirit of holiness', teach us to recognise, and hate, and have done with sin. He is 'the Spirit of light and wisdom' who leads us into the heavenly secret of God's overflowing grace. He is 'the Spirit of love and power' who teaches us to witness for Christ and to labour for souls with tender pity. The more closely 1 associate all these blessings with the Spirit, the more shall I be convinced of his deity and shall be the more ready to commit myself to his guidance, as I give myself to prayer. What a different life mine would be if I knew the Spirit as the Spirit of prayer! There is still another thing which I need constantly to learn afresh, that -

3. The Spirit desires to have full possession of my life. We pray for more of the Spirit, and we pray well, if alongside this prayer we set the truth that the Spirit wants more of me. The Spirit would possess me entirely. Just as my soul has my whole body for its dwelling-place and service, so the Holy Spirit would have my body and soul as his dwelling-place, entirely under his control. No one can continue long and earnestly in prayer without beginning to perceive that the Spirit is gently leading to an entirely new consecration, of which previously he knew nothing. 'I seek Thee with my whole heart.' The Spirit will make such words more and more the motto of our lives. He will cause us to recognise that what remains in us of double-mindedness is truly sinful. He will reveal Christ as the almighty deliverer from all sin, who is always near to defend us. He will lead us in this way in prayer, to forget ourselves and make us willing to offer ourselves for training as intercessors, to whom God can entrust the carrying out of his plans, and who day and night cry to him to avenge his church of her adversary.

God help us to know the Spirit and to reverence him as the Spirit of prayer!

Chapter 7

Sin -vs- The Holiness of God

To understand grace, to understand Christ aright, we must understand what sin is. And how otherwise can we come to this understanding than through the light of God and his word?

Come with me to the beginning of the Bible. See there man created by God, after his image, and pronounced by his creator to be very good. Then sin entered, as rebellion against God. Adam was driven out of paradise and was brought along with the untold millions of following generations under curse and ruin. That was the work of sin. Here we learn its nature and power.

Come further on and see the ark of Noah on Ararat. So terrible had godlessness become among men, God saw nothing for it but to destroy man from off the earth. That was the work of sin.

Come once more with me to Sinai. God wished to establish his covenant with a new nation - with the people of Israel. But because of man's sinfulness, he could do this only by appearing in darkness and lightning so terrible that Moses said: 'I exceedingly fear and quake' (Heb. 12.2 1). And before the end of the giving of the law that awful message came: 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them' (Gal. 3. 10). It was sin which made that necessary.

Come once more with me, and this time to Calvary There see what sin is, and the hatred and enmity with which the world cast out and crucified the Son of God. There sin reached its climax. There Christ was, by God himself, made sin, and became a curse, as the only way to destroy sin. In the agony in which he prayed in Gethsemane, that he might not drink the terrible cup, and in the agony in which on the cross, in the deep darkness of desertion, he cried out: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' we obtain at least some faint idea of the curse and indescribable suffering which sin brings. If anything can make us hate and detest sin, it is Christ on the cross.

Come once again with me to the judgment seat of the Great Day, and see the bottomless pit of darkness wherein countless souls will be plunged under the sentence: 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire' (Matt. 25.41). Oh, will not these words soften our hearts and fill us with a never-to-beforgotten horror of sin, so that we may hate it with a perfect hatred?

And now is there anything else that can help us to understand what sin is? Yes, there is. Turn your eyes inward, and behold your own heart, and see sin there. Remember that all you have already seen of the hatefulness and godlessness of sin should teach you what sin in your own heart means - all the enmity against God, all the ruin of men, all of its inner nature of hatefulness, lie hidden in the sin you have committed, guilt of every transgression against God. And when you remember that you are a child of God, and yet commit sin and allow it sometimes to fulfill its lusts, is it not fitting that you should cry out with shame: 'Woe is me, because of my sin'? 'Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, 0 Lord' (Luke 5:8).

One great power of sin is that it blinds men so that they do not recognise its true character. Even the Christian himself finds an excuse in the thought that he can never be perfect and that daily sin is a necessity. He is so accustomed to the thought of sinning that he has almost lost the power and ability of mourning over sin. And yet there can be no real progress in grace apart from an increased consciousness of the sin and guilt of every transgression against God. And there cannot be a more important question than this: 'How can 1 regain the lost tenderness of conscience and become prepared really to offer to God the sacrifice of a broken heart?'

Scripture teaches us the way. Let the Christian remember what God thinks about sin - the hatred with which his holiness bums against it, the solemn sacrifice which he made to conquer sin, and deliver us from it. Let him tarry in God's presence till his holiness shines upon him, and he cries out with Isaiah: 'Woe is me! for I am undone' (Isa. 6.5).

Let him remember the cross, and what the love of Christ had to endure there, through the unspeakable pain which sin caused him; and let him ask if this will not teach him to hearken to the voice which says: 'Oh, do not this abominable thing which 1 hate' (Jer. 44.4). Let him take time, so that the blood and love of the cross may exercise their full influence on him, and let him think of sin as nothing less than giving his hand to Satan and to his power. Is not this a terrible result of our prayerlessness, and of our short and hasty tarrying before God - that the true knowledge of sin is almost lost?

Let the believer think not only of what redemption has cost Christ, but also of the fact that Christ is offered to him, by the Holy Spirit, as a gift of inconceivable grace, through whom divine forgiveness and purification and renewing have taken possession of him; and let him ask himself with what return such love should be repaid. If only time were taken to tarry in God's presence and ask such questions, the Spirit of God would accomplish his work of conviction of sin in us and would teach us to take an entirely new standpoint, and would give us a new view of sin. The thought would begin to arise in our hearts that we have in very deed been redeemed, so that in the power of Christ we may live every day as partners in the great victory which Christ obtained over sin on the cross, and manifest it in our walk.

What think you? Do you not begin to see that the sin of prayerlessness has had a more terrible effect than you at first supposed? It is because of this hasty and superficial converse with God that the sense of sin is so weak and that no motives have power to help you to hate and flee from sin as you ought. Nothing, nothing except the hidden, humble, constant fellowship with God can teach you, as a child of God, to hate sin as God wants you to hate it. Nothing, nothing but the constant nearness and unceasing power of the living Christ can make it possible for you rightly to understand what sin is and to detest it. And without this deeper understanding of sin, there will be no thought of appropriating the victory which is made possible for you in Christ Jesus, and will be wrought in you by the Spirit.

O my God, cause me to know my sin and teaching me to tarry before thee and to wait on thee till thy Spirit causes something of thy holiness to rest upon me! O my God, cause me to know my sin, and let this drive me to listen to the promise: 'He that abideth in him sinneth not,' and to expect the fulfillment from Thee!

The Holiness of God

It has often been said that the conception of sin and of the holiness of God has been lost in the Church. In the inner chamber we have the place where we may team again how to give God's holiness the position it should have in our faith and life. If you do not know how to spend half an hour in prayer, take up the subject of God's holiness. Bow before him. Give yourself time, and give God also time, that he and you may come into touch with one another. It is a great work, but one fraught with great blessing.

If you wish to strengthen yourself in the practice of this holy presence, take up the holy word. Take, for instance, the book of Leviticus and notice how God seven times gives the command: 'Ye shall be holy, for I am holy' (11.44, 45; 19.2; 20.7, 26; 21.8; 22.32). Still more frequent is the expression: 'I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.' This great thought is taken over into the New Testament. Peter says (1 Pet. 1. 15, 16): 'Be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for 1 am holy.' Paul writes in his first epistle (1

Thess. 3.13; 4.7; 5.24): 'he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness.... God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness... Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.'

Nothing but the knowledge of God, as the holy one, will make us holy. And how are we to obtain that knowledge of God, save in the inner chamber? It is a thing utterly impossible unless we take time and allow the holiness of God to shine on us. How can any man on earth obtain intimate knowledge of another man of remarkable wisdom, if he does not associate with him, and place himself under his influence? And how can God himself sanctify us, if we do not take time to be brought under the power of the glory of his holiness? Nowhere can we get to know the holiness of God, and come under its influence and power, save in the-inner chamber. It has been well said: 'No man can expect to make progress in holiness who is not often and long alone with God.'

And what now is this holiness of God? It is the highest and most glorious and most all-embracing of all the attributes of God. Holiness is the most profound word in the Bible. It is a word that is at home in heaven. Both the Old and New Testaments tell us this. Isaiah heard the seraphs with veiled faces cry out: 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts' (6.3). John heard the four living creatures say: 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty' (Rev. 4. 8). This is the highest expression of God's glory in heaven, by beings who live in his immediate presence and bow low before him. And dare we imagine that we, by thinking, and reading, and bearing, can understand or become partakers of the holiness of God? What folly! Oh, that we might begin to thank God that we have a place in the inner chamber, a place where we can be alone with him, and take time for the prayer: 'Let thy holiness, 0 Lord, shine more and more into our hearts, that they may become holy.'

And let our hearts be deeply ashamed of our prayerlessness, through which we have made it impossible for God to impart his holiness to us. Let us beseech God fervently to forgive us this sin, and to allure us by his heavenly grace, and to strengthen us to have fellowship with him, the holy God.

I have said that the meaning of the words, 'The holiness of God', is not easily expressed. But we may begin by saying that they imply the unspeakable aversion and hatred with which God regards sin. And if you wish to understand what that means, remember that he preferred to see his Son die, rather than that sin should reign. Think of the Son of God, who gave up his life rather than act in the least matter against the will of the Father. Still further, he had such a hatred of sin that he preferred to die rather than that men should be held in its power. That is something of the holiness of God, which is a pledge that he will do everything for us - for you and me - to deliver us from sin. Holiness is the fire of God that will consume sin in us and make us holy sacrifices, pure and acceptable before him. It was for this reason that the Spirit came down as fire. He is the Spirit of God's holiness, the Spirit of sanctification in us.

Oh, think over the holiness of God, and bow in lowliness before him, till your heart is filled with the assurance of what the holy one will do for you. Take a week, if necessary, to read and re-read the words of God on this great truth, till your heart is brought under the conviction: 'This is the glory of the inner chamber, to converse with God the holy one; to bow down in deep humility and shame before him, because we have so despised him and his love through our prayerlessness.' There we shall receive the assurance that he will again take us into-fellowship with himself. No one can expect to understand and receive the holiness of God who is not often and long alone with God.

Someone has said that the holiness of God is the expression of the unspeakable distance by which he in his righteousness is separated from us, and yet also of the unspeakable nearness in which he in his love longs to hold fellowship with us and dwell in us. Bow in humble reverence, as you think of the immeasurable distance between you and God. Bow in childlike confidence in the unspeakable desire of his love to be united with you in the deepest intimacy; and reckon most confidently on him to reveal something of his holiness to the soul which thirst

after him and waits upon him and is quiet before him.

Notice how the two sides of the holiness of God are united in the cross. So terrible was the aversion and anger of God against our sin that Christ was left in the thick darkness, because God, when sin was laid upon him, had to hide his face from him. And yet so deep was the love of God toward us and he so desired to be united to us that he spared not his Son but gave him over to unutterable sufferings, that so he might receive us, in union with Christ, into his holiness, and press us to his heart as his beloved children. It was of this suffering that our Lord Jesus said: 'I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth' (John 17.19). Thus he is become of God our sanctification, and we are holy in him.

I beseech you, think not little of the grace that you have a holy God who longs to make you holy. Think not little of the voice of God which calls you to give time to him in the stillness of the inner chamber, so that he may cause his holiness to rest on you. Let it be your business every day, in the secrecy of the inner chamber, to meet the holy God. You will be repaid for the trouble it may cost you. The reward will be sure and rich. You will learn to hate sin, and to regard it as accursed and conquered. 'Me new nature will give you a horror of sin. The living Jesus, the holy God, will, as conqueror, be your power and strength; and you will begin to believe the great promise contained in 1 Thessalonians 5.23, 24: 'The very God of peace sanctify you wholly... Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.'

Chapter 8

Obedience; The Victorious Life

In opposition to sin stands obedience. 'For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous... Ye became the servants of righteousness' (Rom. 5.19; 6.18). In connection with all that has been said about sin, and the new life, and the reception of the Holy Spirit, we must always give to obedience the place assigned to it by God.

It was because Christ humbled himself and became obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross, that God so highly exalted him. And Paul, in this connection, exhorts us: 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus' (Phil. 2.5). We see, above everything else, that the obedience of Christ, which was so pleasing to God, must become really the characteristic of our disposition and of our entire walk. Just as a servant knows that he must first obey his master in all things, so the surrender to an implicit and unquestioning obedience must become the essential characteristic of our lives.

How little this is understood by Christians! How many there are who allow themselves to be misled, and rest satisfied with the thought that sin is a necessity, that one must sin every day! It would be difficult to say how great the harm is which has been done by this mistake. It is one of the chief causes why the sin of disobedience is so little recognised. 1 have myself heard Christians, speaking about the cause of darkness and weakness, say, halflaughingly: 'Yes, it is just disobedience again.' We try to get rid of a servant as speedily as possible who is habitually disobedient, but it is not regarded as anything extraordinary that a child of God should be disobedient every day. Disobedience is daily acknowledged, and yet there is no turning away from it.

Have we not here the reason why so much prayer for the power of the Holy Spirit is offered, and yet so few answers come? Do we not see from Acts 5.32 that God has given his Holy Spirit to them that obey him? Every child of God has received the Holy Spirit- If he uses the measure of the Holy Spirit which he has, with the definite purpose of being obedient to the utmost, then God can and will favour him with further manifestations of the Spirit's power. But if he permits disobedience to get the upper hand, day by day, he need not wonder if his prayer for more of the Spirit remains unanswered.

We have already said that we must not forget that the Spirit desires to possess more of us. How can we wholly surrender ourselves to him otherwise than by being obedient? The Scripture says that we must be led by the Spirit, that we must walk by the Spirit. My right relationship to the Holy Spirit is that I allow myself to be guided and ruled by him. Obedience is the great factor in our whole relationship to God. 'Obey my voice, and I will be your God' (Jer. 7.23; 11.4).

Mark how the Lord Jesus, on the last night, when giving his great promise about the Holy Spirit, lays emphasis on this point. 'If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter' (John 14.15, 16). Obedience was essential as a preparation for the reception of the Spirit. And this thought is often repeated by him. 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and 1 will love him, and will manifest myself to him' (John 14.21). So also in verse 23: 'If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' 'If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you' (15.7). 'If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love' (verse 10). 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you' (verse 14).

Can words more plainly or impressively declare that the whole fife, in the new dispensation, following the resurrection of Christ, depends on obedience? That is the Spirit of Christ. He lived to do not his own will, but the will of the Father. And he cannot with his Spirit make an abiding home in the heart of one who does not surrender himself utterly to a life of obedience.

Alas, how few there are who are truly concerned because of this disobedience! How little it is believed that Christ really asks for and expects this from us because he has undertaken to make it possible for us. How much is it manifested in prayer, or walk, or in the depths of the soul-life, that we really endeavour to be well-pleasing to the Lord in all things? We say too little in regard to our disobedience. 'I will be sorry for my sin.'

But is obedience really possible? It is certain for the man who believes that Christ Jesus is his sanctification and relies on him.

Just as it is impossible for a man whose eyes have not yet been opened to see that Christ can at once forgive his sin, so is it also with faith in the assurance that there is in Christ a sure promise of power to accomplish all that God desires from his child. Just as, through faith, we found the fullness of forgiveness; so through a new act of faith, a real deliverance from the dominion of the sin which has so easily beset us is obtained, and the abiding blessing of the continuous experience of the keeping power of Christ becomes ours. This faith obtains a new insight into promises the meaning of which was not previously understood: 'The God of peace ... make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ' (Heb. 13.20, 21). 'Unto him that is able to keep you from falling ... be glory and majesty' (Jude 24, 25). 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall' (2 Pet. 1. 10). 'To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness' (1 Thess. 3.13). 'But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil' (2 Thess. 3.3).

When the soul understands that the fulfilment of these and other promises is secured for us in Christ, and that, as certainly as the forgiveness of sin is assured to us in him, so also is power against new or fresh attacks of sin assured to us. Then for the first time is the lesson learned aright that faith can confidently rely upon a full Christ and his abiding protection.

This faith sheds a wholly new light on the life of obedience. Christ holds himself responsible to work this out in me every moment if I only trust him for it. Then 1 begin to understand the important phrase with which Paul begins and closes his epistle to the Romans (Rom. 1.5; 16.26): 'The obedience of faith.' Faith brings me to the Lord Jesus, not only to obtain the forgiveness of sin, but also that 1 may every moment enjoy the power which will make it possible for me, as a child of God, to abide in him and to be numbered among his obedient children of whom it is written that, as he who has called them is holy, as they also may be holy in all manner of conversation. Everything depends on whether or not 1 believe on the whole Christ, with the fullness of his grace, that he will, not now and then but every moment, be the strength of my life. Such faith will lead to an obedience which will enable me to 'walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work... strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power' (Col. 1.10, 11).

The soul which feeds on such promises will experience now, instead of the disobedience of self-effort, what the obedience of faith means. All such promises have their measure, their certainty, and their strength in the living Christ.

The victorious life

In the chapter on 'The More Abundant Life', we viewed the matter chiefly from the side of our Lord Jesus. We

saw that there is to be found in him - the crucified, and the risen, and the glorified one who baptises with the Holy Spirit - all that is needful for a life of abundant grace. In speaking of the victorious life, we shall now look at the matter from another standpoint. We want to see how a Christian can live really as a victor. We have already often said that the prayer life is not something which can be improved by itself. It is so intimately bound up with the entire spiritual life that it is only when that whole life (previously marked by lack of prayer) becomes renewed and sanctified that prayer can have its rightful place of power. We must not be satisfied with less than the victorious life to which God calls his children.

You remember how our Lord, in the seven epistles in the Revelation of John, concludes with a promise to those who overcome. Take the trouble of going over that seven-times repeated 'him that overcometh'; and notice what unspeakably glorious promises are there given. And they were given even to churches like Ephesus, that had lost its first love; and Sardis, to whom it was said, 'thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead' (Rev. 3.1); and Laodicea, with her luke-warmness and self satisfaction - as proof that, if only they would repent, they might win the crown of victory. The call comes to every Christian to strive for the crown. It is impossible to be a healthy Christian, still more impossible to be a preacher in the power of God, if everything is not sacrificed to gain the victory.

The answer to the question, of how we attain to it, is simple. All is in Christ. 'Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ' (2 Cor. 2.14). 'In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us' (Rom. 8.37). All depends on our right relationship to Christ, our entire surrender, perfect faith, and unbroken fellowship with him. But you wish to know how to attain to all this. Listen once more to the simple directions as to the way by which the full enjoyment of what is prepared for you in Christ may be yours. These are - a new discovery of sin; a new surrender to Christ; a new faith in the power which will make it possible for you to persevere.

1. A new discovery of sin

In Romans 3, you find described the knowledge of sin which is necessary, in repentance, for forgiveness 'That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God' (verse 19). There you took your stand, you recognised your sin more or less consciously, and confessed it, and you obtained mercy. But if you would lead the victorious life, something more is needful. This comes with the experience that in you, that is, in your flesh, there 'dwelleth no good thing' (Rom. 7.18). You have a delight in the law of God after the inner man, but you see another law in your members bringing you into captivity to the law of sin and compelling you to cry out: '0 wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' (verse 24). It is not, as it was at conversion, when you thought over your few or many sins. This work goes much deeper. You find that, as a Christian, you have no power to do the good that you wish to do. You must be brought to a new and deeper insight into the sin of your nature and into your utter weakness, even though you are a Christian, to live as you ought. And you will learn to cry out: 'Who shall deliver me; I, wretched man, a prisoner bound under the law of sin?'

The answer to this question is: 'I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord' (Rom. 7.25). Then follows the revelation of what there is in Christ. It is not just as given in Romans 3. It is more: I am in Christ Jesus, and 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death', (Rom. 8.2) under which I was bound. It is the experience that the law or power of the life of the Spirit in Christ has made me free and now calls on me, in a new sense and by a new surrender, to acknowledge Christ as the bestower of the victory.

2. A new surrender to Christ

You may have used these words 'surrender' and 'consecration' many times, but without rightly understanding what they mean. As you have been brought by the teaching of Romans 7 to a complete sense of the hopelessness of leading a true Christian life, or a true prayer life, by your own efforts, so you feel that the Lord Jesus must take you up, by his own power, in an entirely new way; and must take possession of you, by his Spirit, in an entirely new measure. This alone can preserve you from constantly sinning afresh. This only can make you really victorious. This leads you to look away from yourself, really to get free from yourself, and to expect everything from the Lord Jesus.

If we begin to understand this, we are prepared to admit that in our nature there is nothing good, that it is under a curse, and is nailed with Christ to his cross. We come to see what Paul means when he says that we are dead to sin by the death of Christ. Thus do we obtain a share of the glorious resurrection life there is in him. By such an insight we are encouraged to believe that Christ, through his life in us, through his continual indwelling, can keep us. Just as, at our conversion, we had no rest till we knew he had received us so now we feel the need of coming to him, to receive from him the assurance that he has really undertaken to keep us by the power of his resurrection life. And we feel then that there must be an act as definite as his reception of us at conversion, by which he gives us the assurance of victory. And although it appears to us to be too great and too much, yet the man who casts himself, without plea, into the arms of Christ will experience that he does indeed receive us into such a fellowship as will make us, from the beginning onwards, 'more than conquerors'.

3. A new faith in the power which will make it possible for you to persevere in your surrender

You have heard of Keswick, and the truth for which it stands. It is that Christ is prepared to take upon himself the care and preservation of our lives every day, and all the day long, if we trust him to do it. In the testimony given by many, this thought is emphasised. They have told us that they felt themselves called to a new surrender, to an entire consecration of life to Christ, reaching to the smallest things, but they were hindered by the fear of failure. The thirst after holiness, after an unbroken fellowship with Jesus, after a life of persevering childlike obedience, drew them one way. But the question arose: 'Shall I continue faithful?' And to this question there came no answer, till they believed that the surrender must be made, not in their own strength, but in a power which was bestowed by a glorified Lord. He would not only keep them for the future, but he must first make possible for them the surrender of faith which expects that future grace. It was in the power of Christ himself that they were able to present themselves to him.

O Christian, only believe that there is a victorious life! Christ, the victor, is your Lord, who will undertake for you in everything and will enable you to do all that the Father expects from you. Be of good courage. Will you not trust him to do this great work for you who has given his life for you and has forgiven your sins? Only dare, in his power, to surrender yourself to the life of those who are kept from sin by the power of God. Along with the deepest conviction that there is no good in you, confess that you see in the Lord Jesus all the goodness of which you have need, for the life of a child of God; and begin literally to live 'by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me' (Gal. 2.20).

Let me, for your encouragement, give the testimony of Bishop Monte, a man of deep humility and tender piety. When he first heard of Keswick he was afraid of 'perfectionism' and would have nothing to do with it. Unexpectedly, during a vacation in Scotland, he came in contact with some friends at a small convention. There he heard an address by which he was convinced how entirely the teaching was according to Scripture. There was no word about sinlessness in the flesh or in man. It was a setting forth of how Jesus can keep from sin a man with a sinful nature. The light shone into his heart. He who had always been counted a tender Christian came into touch now with a new experience of what Christ is willing to do for one who gives himself entirely to him Listen to

what he says on the text: 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me' (Phil. 4.13). 1 dare to say that it is possible for those who really are willing to reckon on the power of the Lord, for keeping and victory, to lead a life in which his promises are taken as they stand, and are found to be true. It is possible to cast all our care on him daily, and to enjoy deep peace in doing it. It is possible to have the thoughts and imaginations of our hearts purified in the deepest meaning of the word, through faith. It is possible to see the will of God in everything, and to receive it, not with sighing, but with singing. It is possible, in the inner life of desire and feeling, to lay aside all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and evil-speaking, every day and every hour. It is possible, by taking complete refuge in divine power, to become strong through and through; and where previously our greatest weakness lay, to find that the things which formerly upset all our resolves to be patient, or pure, or humble, furnish today an opportunity -through him who loved us, and works in us an agreement with his will, and a blessed sense of his presence and his power to make sin powerless. These things are divine possibilities, and because they are his work, the true experience of them will always cause us to bow lower at his feet and to learn to thirst and long for more. We cannot possibly be satisfied with anything less than - each day, each hour, each moment, in Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit - to walk with God.'

Thank God, a life of victory is sure for those who have a knowledge of their inward ruin and are hopeless in themselves, but who, in 'the confidence of despair', have looked to Jesus, and, in faith in his power to make the act of surrender possible for them, they have done it, in his might, and now rely on him alone every day and every hour.

Chapter 9

Hints-for the Inner Chamber; Time

At the conference, a brother who had earnestly confessed his neglect of prayer, but who was able, later, to declare that his eyes had been opened to see that the Lord really supplied grace for all that he required from us, asked if some hints could not be given as to the best way of spending time profitably in the inner chamber. There was no opportunity then for giving an answer. Perhaps the following thoughts may be of help:

1. As you enter the inner chamber let your first work be to thank God for the unspeakable love which invites you to come to him and to converse freely with him. If your heart is cold and head, remember that religion is not a matter of feeling, but has to do first with the will. Raise your heart to God and thank him for the assurance you have that he looks down on you and will bless you. Through such an act of faith you honour God and draw your soul away from being occupied with itself. Think also of the glorious grace of the Lord Jesus, who is willing to teach you to pray and to give you the disposition to do so. Think, too, of the Holy Spirit who was purposely given to cry, 'Abba, Father', in your heart, and to help your weakness in prayer. Five minutes spent thus will strengthen your faith for your work in the inner chamber. Once more I say, begin with an act of thanksgiving and praise God for the inner chamber and the promise of blessing there.

2. You must prepare yourself for prayer by prayerful Bible study. The great reason why the inner chamber is not attractive is that people do not know how to pray. Their stock of words is soon exhausted and they do not know what further to say, because they forget that prayer is not a soliloquy, where everything comes from one side; but it is a dialogue, where God's child listens to what the Father says, and replies to it, and then asks for the things he needs.

Read a few verses from the Bible. Do not concern yourself with the difficulties contained in them. You can consider these later; but take what you understand, apply it to yourself, and ask the Father to make his word light and power in your heart. Thus you will have material enough for prayer from the word which the Father speaks to you; you will also have the liberty to ask for things you need. Keep on in this way, and the inner chamber will become at length, not a place where you sigh and struggle only, but one of living fellowship with the Father in heaven. Prayerful study of the Bible is indispensable for powerful prayer.

3. When you have thus received the word into your heart, turn to prayer. But do not attempt it hastily or thoughtlessly, as though you knew well enough how to pray. Prayer in our own strength brings no blessing. Take time to present yourself reverently and in quietness before God. Remember his greatness and holiness and love. Think over what you wish to ask from him. Do not be satisfied with going over the same things every day. No child goes on saying the same thing day after day to his earthly father .

Converse with the Father is coloured by the needs of the day. Let your prayer be something definite, arising either out of the word which you have read, or out of the real soul-needs which you long to have satisfied. Let your prayer be so definite that you can say as you go out, 'I know what 1 have asked from my Father, and I expect an answer.' It is a good plan sometimes to take a piece of paper and write down what you wish to pray for. You might keep such a paper for a week or more, and repeat the prayers till some new need arises.

4. What has been said is in reference to your own needs. But you know that we are allowed to Pray that we may help also in the needs of others. One great reason why prayer in the inner chamber does not bring more joy and

blessing is that it is too selfish, and selfishness is the death of prayer.

Remember your family; your congregation, with its interests; your own neighbourhood; and the church to which you belong. Let your heart be enlarged and take up the interests of missions and of the church through the whole world. Become an intercessor, and you will experience for the first time the blessedness of prayer, as you find out that God will make use of you to share his blessing with others through prayer. You will begin to feel that there is something worth living for, as you find that you have something to say to God, and that he from heaven will do things in answer to your prayers which otherwise would not have been done.

A child can ask his father for bread. A full-grown son converses with him about all the interests of his business, and about his further purposes. A weak child of God prays only for himself, but a full-grown man in Christ understands how to consult with God over what must take place in the kingdom. Let your prayer list bear the names of those for whom you pray - your minister, and all other ministers, and the different missionary affairs with which you are connected. Thus the inner chamber will really become a wonder of God's goodness and a fountain of great joy. It will become the most blessed place on earth. It is a great thing to say, but it is the simple truth, that God will make it a Bethel, where his angels shall ascend and descend, and where you will cry out: 'The Lord shall be my God.' He will make it also Peniel, where you will see the face of God, as a prince of God, as one who wrestled with the angel and overcame him.

5. Do not forget the close bond between the inner chamber and the outer world. The attitude of the inner chamber must remain with us all the day. The object of the inner chamber is so to unite us to God that we may have him always abiding with us. Sin, thoughtlessness, and yielding to the flesh, or to the world unfit us for the inner chamber and bring a cloud over the soul. If you have stumbled, or fallen, return to the inner chamber; let your first work be to invoke the blood of Jesus and to claim cleansing by it. Rest not till by confession you have repented of and put away your sin. Let the precious blood really give you a fresh freedom of approach to God. Remember that the roots of your life in the inner chamber strike far out in body and soul so as to manifest themselves in business life. Let 'the obedience of faith', in which you pray in secret, rule you constantly. The inner chamber is intended to bind man to God, to supply him with power from God, to enable him to live for God alone. God be thanked for the inner chamber and for the blessed life which he will enable us there to experience and nourish.

Time

Before the creation of the world time did not exist. God lived in eternity in a way which we little understand. With creation, time began, and everything was placed under its power. God has placed all living creatures under a law of slow growth. Think of the length of time it takes for a child to become a man in body and mind. In learning, in wisdom, in business, in handicraft, and in politics, everything somehow depends on patience and perseverance. Everything needs time.

It is just the same in religion. There can be no converse with a holy God, no fellowship between heaven and earth, no power for the salvation of the souls of others, unless much time is set apart for it. Just as it is necessary for a child for long years to eat and learn every day, so the life of grace entirely depends on the time men are willing to give to it day by day.

The minister is appointed by God to teach and help those who are engaged in the ordinary avocations of life to find time and to use it aright for the preservation of the spiritual life. The minister cannot do this unless he himself has a living experience of a life of prayer. His highest calling is not preaching, or speaking, or parochial visitation, but it is to cultivate the life of God daily, and to be a witness of what the Lord teaches him and accomplishes in him.

Was it not so with the Lord Jesus? Why must he, who had no sin to confess, sometimes spend all night in prayer to God? Because the divine life had to be strengthened in intercourse with his Father. His experience of a life in which he took time for fellowship with God has enabled him to share that life with us.

Oh, that each minister might understand that he has received his time from God with a servitude on it! God must have for fellowship with himself the first and the best of your time. Without this, your preaching and labour have little power. Here on earth 1 may spend my time for the money or the learning which I receive in exchange. The minister can exchange his time for the divine power and the spiritual blessings to be obtained from heaven. That, and nothing else, makes him a man of God and ensures that his preaching will be in the demonstration of the Spirit and power.

Chapter 10

The Example of Paul

Be Ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.' I Corinthians 11. 1

1. Paul was a minister who prayed much for his congregation

Let us read his words prayerfully and calmly so that we may hear the voice of the Spirit.

'Night and day praying exceedingly that we ... might perfect that which is lacking in your faith... The Lord make you to increase ... to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness' (1 Thess. 3.10-13). 'The very God of peace sanctify you wholly' (I Thess. 5.23).

What food for meditation!

'Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself ... comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work' (2 Thess. 2.16, 17).

'Without ceasing, I make mention of you always in my prayers; Making request...that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established' (Rom. 1.9-11).

'My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved' (Rom. 10. 1).

'I ... cease not ... making mention of you in my prayers; that God ... may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him ... that ye may know ... what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe' (Eph. 1. 16-19).

'For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father ... that he would grant you ... to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted ... in love ... might be filled with all the fullness of God' (Eph. 3:14-19).

'Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy ... I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more ... that ye may be sincere ... filled with the fruits of righteousness' (Phil. 1.4, 9-11).

'But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus' (Phil. 4.19).

'We ... do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will ... that ye might walk worthy of the Lord ... strengthened with all might according to his glorious power' (Col. 1.911). 'I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you ... as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love' (Col. 2.1, 2).

What a study for the inner chamber! These passages teach us that unceasing prayer formed a large part of Paul's service in the gospel; we see the high spiritual aim which he set before himself, in his work on behalf of believers; and the tender and self-sacrificing love with which he ever continued to think of the Church and its needs. Let us ask God to bring each one of us, and all the ministers of his word, to a life of which such prayer is the healthy and natural outflow. We shall need to turn again and again to these pages if we would really be brought by the Spirit to the apostolic life which God has given us as an example.

2. Paul was a minister who asked his congregation to pray much

Read again with prayerful attention:

'I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea' (Rom. 15.30,31). 'We ... trust ... in God ... that he will yet deliver us; Ye also helping together by prayer for us' (2 Cor. 1.9-11).

'Praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel ... as I ought to speak' (Eph. 6.18-20).

'For I know that this shall turn to my salvation, through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ' (Phil. 1. 19).

'Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak ... as I ought to speak' (Col. 4.2-4).

'Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you' (2 Thess. 3. 1).

What a deep insight Paul had as to the unity of the body of Christ and the relation of the members one to another! It is as we permit the Holy Spirit to work powerfully in us that he will reveal this truth to us, and we too shall have this insight. What a glimpse he gives us of the power of the spiritual life among these Christians, by the way in which he reckoned that at Rome, and Corinth, and Ephesus, and Colossae, and Philippi, there were men and women on whom he could rely for prayer that would reach heaven and have power with God! And what a lesson for all ministers, to lead them to inquire if they truly appreciate the unity of the body at its right value; if they are endeavouring to train up Christians as intercessors; and if they indeed understand that Paul had that confidence because he was himself so strong in prayer for the congregation! Let us learn the lesson and beseech God that ministers and congregations together may grow in the grace of prayer, so that their entire service and Christian life may witness that the Spirit of prayer rules them. Then we may be confident that God will avenge his own elect which cry out day and night unto him.

Ministers of the Spirit

What is the meaning of the expression: the minister of the gospel is a minister of the Spirit (see 2 Cor. 3.6, 8)? It means:

1. That the preacher is entirely under the power and control of the Spirit, so that he may be led and used by the Spirit as he wills.

2. Many pray for the -Spirit, that they may make use of him and his power for their work. This is certainly wrong. It is he who must use you. Your relationship toward him must be one of deep dependence and utter submission. The Spirit must have you entirely, and always, and in all things under his power.

3. There are many who think they must preach the word only, and that the Spirit will make the word fruitful. They do not understand that it is the Spirit in and through the preacher who will bring the word to the heart. I must not

be satisfied with praying to God to bless, through the operation of his Spirit, the word that 1 preach. The Lord wants me to be filled with the Spirit: then 1 shall speak aright and my preaching will be in the manifestation of the Spirit and power.

4. We see this on the day of Pentecost. They were filled with the Spirit and began to speak, and spoke with power through the Spirit who was in them.

5. Thus we learn what the relationship of the minister toward the Spirit should be. He must have a strong belief that the Spirit is in him, that the Spirit will teach him in his daily life and will strengthen him to bear witness to the Lord Jesus in his preaching and visiting; he must live in ceaseless prayer that he may be kept and strengthened by the power of the Spirit.

6. When the Lord promised the apostles that they should receive power when the Holy Spirit had come upon them and commanded them to wait for him, it was as though he had said: 'Do not dare to preach without this power. It is the indispensable preparation for your work. Everything depends on it.'

7. What then is the lesson we may learn from the phrase 'ministers of the Spirit'? Alas, how little we have understood this! How little have we lived in it! How little have we experienced of the power of the Holy Spirit! What must we do then? There must be deep confession of guilt, that we have so constantly grieved the Spirit, because we have not lived daily as his ministers; and simple childlike surrender to his leading in sure confidence that the Lord will work a change in us; and further, daily fellowship with the Lord Jesus in ceaseless prayer. He will bestow on us the Holy Spirit as rivers of living water.

Chapter 11

The Word and Prayer; Preaching and Prayer; Wholeheartedness

Little of the word with little prayer is death to the spiritual fife. Much of the word with little prayer gives a sickly life. Much prayer with little of the word gives more life, but without steadfastness. A full measure of the word and prayer each day gives a healthy and powerful life. Think of the Lord Jesus. In his youth and manhood he treasured the word in his heart. In the temptation in the wilderness, and on every opportunity that presented itself - till he cried out on the cross in death, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' (Matt. 27.46). He showed that the word of God filled his heart. And in his prayer life he manifested two things: first, that the word supplies us with material for prayer and encourages us in expecting everything from God. The second is that it is only by prayer that we can live such a life that every word of God can be fulfilled in us. And how then can we come to this, so that the word and prayer may each have its undivided right over us? There is only one answer. Our lives must be wholly transformed. We must get a new, a healthy, a heavenly life, in which the hunger after God's word and the thirst after God express themselves in prayer as naturally as do the needs of our earthly life. Every manifestation of the power of the flesh in us and the weakness of our spiritual life must drive us to the conviction that God will, through the powerful operation of his Holy Spirit, work out a new and strong life in US.

Oh, that we but understood that the Holy Spirit is essentially the Spirit of the word and the Spirit of prayer! He will cause the word to become a joy and a light in our souls, and he will also most surely help us in prayer to know the mind and will of God, and find in it our delight. If we as ministers wish to explain these things and to train God's people for the inheritance which is prepared for them, then we must commit ourselves from this moment forward to the leading of the Holy Spirit; must, in faith in what he will do in us, appropriate the heavenly life of Christ as he lived it here on earth, with certain expectation that the Spirit, who filled him with the word and prayer, will also accomplish that work in us,

Yes, let us believe that the Spirit who is in us is the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, and that he is in us to make us truly partakers of his life. If we firmly believe this and set our hearts upon it, then there will come a change in our intercourse with the word and prayer such as we could not have thought possible. Believe it firmly; expect it surely.

We are familiar with the vision of the valley of dry bones. We know that the Lord said to the prophet: 'Prophesy upon these bones ... Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live' (Ezek. 37.4, 5). And we know how, when he had done this, there was a noise, and bone came together to its bone, and flesh came up, and skin covered them - but there was no breath in them. The prophesying to the bones - the preaching of the word of God - had a powerful influence. It was the beginning of the great miracle which was about to happen, and there lay an entire army of men newly made. It was the beginning of the work of life in them, but there was no spirit there.

How then the Lord said to the prophet: 'Prophesy unto the wind ... Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, 0 breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live' (verse 9). And when the prophet had done this, the Spirit came upon them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a very great army. Prophesying to the bones, that is, preaching, has accomplished a great work. There lay the beautiful new bodies. But the prophesying to the Spirit, 'Come, 0 Spirit', that is, prayer, accomplished a far more wonderful thing. The power of the Spirit was revealed through prayer.

Is not the work of our ministers mostly this prophesying to dry bones in making known the promises of God? This

is followed sometimes by great results. Everything which belongs to the form of godliness has been brought to perfection; a careless congregation becomes regular and devout, but it remains true for the most part: 'There is no life in them. 'Preaching must be followed by prayer. The preacher must come to see that his preaching is comparatively powerless to bring in a new life till he begins to take time for prayer and, according to the teaching of God's word, strives and labours and continues in prayer, and takes no rest, and gives God no rest, till he bestows the Spirit in overflowing power.

Do you not feel that a change must come in our work? We must learn from Peter to continue in prayer in our ministry of the word. Just as we are zealous preachers, we must be zealous in prayer. We must, with all our power, constantly like Paul, pray unceasingly. For the prayer: 'Come, breathe on these slain' (Ezek. 37.9), the answer is sure.

Wholeheartedness

Experience teaches us that if anyone is engaged in a work in which he is not wholehearted, he will seldom succeed. Just think of a student, or his teacher, a man of business, or a warrior. He who does not give himself wholeheartedly to his calling is not likely to succeed. And that is still more true of religion, and above all of the high and holy task of intercourse in prayer with a holy God and of being always well pleasing to him. It is because of this that God has said so impressively: 'Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart' (Jer. 29.13).

As also more than one of God's servants has said: 'I seek thee with my whole heart.' Have you ever thought how many Christians there are of whom it is all too plain that they do not seek God with the whole heart? When they were in trouble over their sins, they seemed to seek God with the whole heart. But when they knew that they had been pardoned one could see by their lives that they were religious, it is true but no one would think: 'This man has surrendered himself with his whole heart to follow God, and to serve him as the supreme work of his life.'

How is it with you? What does your heart say? While you, as minister, for instance, have given yourself up with wholehearted devotion to fulfil your office faithfully and zealously, will you not perhaps acknowledge: 'I fear, or rather 1 am convinced, that my unsatisfactory prayer life is to be attributed to nothing else than that 1 have not lived with a wholehearted surrender of all on earth that could hinder me in fellowship with God.' What a deeply important question to consider in the inner chamber and to give the answer to God! How important to arrive at a plain answer and to utter it all before God! Prayerlessness cannot be overcome as an isolated thing. It is in the closest relationship to the state of the heart. True prayer depends on an undivided heart.

But I cannot give myself that undivided heart which can enable me to say: 'I seek God with my whole heart.' No, that is impossible for you, but God will do it. 'I will give them an heart to know me' (Jer. 24.7). 'I will ... write it [my law] [as a power of life] in their hearts' (Jer. 31.33; Heb. 8. 10). Such promises serve to awaken desire. How ever weak the desire may be, if there is but the sincere determination to strive after what God holds out to us, then he will himself work in our hearts both to will and to do. It is the great work of the Holy Spirit in us to make us willing and to enable us to seek God with the whole heart. May there not be found in us confusion of face because, while we have given ourselves to so many earthly things with all our heart and strength, yet if anything is said about fellowship with our glorious God it so little affects us that we have not sought him with the whole heart.

Chapter 12

'Follow Me'; The Holy Trinity; Life and Prayer; Perseverance in Prayer; Carnal or Spiritual

The Lord did not speak these words to all who believed on him, or who hoped to be blessed by him, but to those whom he would make fishers of men. He said this not only at the first calling of the apostles, but also later on to Peter: 'Henceforth thou shalt catch men' (Luke 5. 10). The holy art of winning souls, of loving and saving them, can be learned only in close and persistent intercourse with Christ. What a lesson for ministers and for Christian workers and others! This intercourse was the great and peculiar privilege of his disciples. The Lord chose them that they might be always with and near him. We read of the choice of the twelve apostles in Mark 3.14: 'And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach. 'So also our Lord said on the last night (John 15.27): 'And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.'

This fact was noticed by outsiders. Thus, for instance, the woman who spoke to Peter: 'This fellow was also with Jesus' (Matt. 26.71). So in the Sanhedrin: 'They took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus' (Acts 4.13). The chief characteristic and indispensable qualification for the man who will bear witness to Christ is that he has been with him. Continuous fellowship with Christ is the only school for the training of ministers of the Holy Spirit. What a lesson for all ministers! It is only he who, like Caleb, follows the Lord fully, who will have power to teach other souls the art of following Jesus. But what an unspeakable grace that the Lord Jesus himself would train us after his own likeness, so that others may learn from us! Then we might say with Paul to our converts: 'Ye became followers of us, and of the Lord...' (I Thess. 1. 6), 'Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ' (1 Cor. 11.1).

Never was there a teacher who took such trouble with his scholars as Jesus Christ will with us who preach his word. He will spare no pains; no time will be too precious or too long for him. In the love which brought him to the cross, he would hold intercourse, converse with us, fashion us, sanctify us, and make us fit for his holy service. Dare we still complain that it is too much for us to spend so much time in prayer? Shall we not commit ourselves entirely to the love which gave up all for us, and look upon it as our greatest happiness now to hold fellowship with him daily? Oh, all you who long for blessing in your ministry, he calls you to be with him. Let this be the greatest joy of your life; it will be the surest preparation for blessing in your service. O my Lord, draw me, help me, hold me fast, and teach me how daily to live in thy fellowship by faith.

The Holy Trinity

1. God is an ever flowing fountain of pure love and blessedness.

2. Christ is the reservoir wherein the fullness of God was made visible as grace, and has been opened for us.

3. The Holy Spirit is the stream of living water that flows from under the throne of God and of the Lamb.

4. The redeemed, God's believing children, are the channels through which the love of the Father, the grace of Christ, and the powerful operation of the Spirit are brought to the earth, there to be imparted to others.

5. What an impression we gain here of the wonderful partnership into which God takes us up, as dispensers of the grace of God! Prayer, when we chiefly pray for ourselves, is but the beginning of the life of prayer. The glory of

prayer is that we have power as intercessors to bring the grace of Christ, and the energising power of the Spirit, upon those souls which are still in darkness.

6. The more surely the channel is connected with the reservoir, the more certainly will the water flow unhindered through it. The more we are occupied in prayer with the fullness of Christ, and with the Spirit who proceeds from him, and the more firmly we abide in fellowship with him, the more surely will our lives be happy and strong. This, however, is still only a preparation for the reality. The more we give ourselves up to fellowship and converse with the triune God, the sooner shall we receive the courage and ability to pray down blessing on souls, on ministers, and on the Church around us.

7. Are you truly a channel which is always open, so that the water may flow through you to the thirsty ones in the dry land? Have you offered yourself unreservedly to God, to become a bearer of the energising operations of the Holy Spirit?

8. Is it not, perhaps, because you have thought only of yourself in prayer that you have experienced so little of the power of prayer? Do understand that the new prayer life into which you have entered in the Lord Jesus can be sustained and strengthened only by the intercession in which you labour for the souls around you, to bring them to know the Lord? Oh, meditate on this--God an ever flowing fountain of love and blessing, and I his child, a living channel through which every day the Spirit and life can be brought to the earth!

Life and Prayer

Our life has a great influence on our prayer, just as our prayer influences our life. The entire life of man is a continuous prayer, to nature or to the world, to provide for his wants and make him happy. This natural prayer and desire can be so strong in a man who also prays to God that the words of prayer which his mouth utters cannot be heard. God cannot at times hear the prayer of your lips because the desires of your heart after the world cry out to him much more strongly and loudly.

The life exercises a mighty influence over prayer. A worldly life, a self-seeking life, makes prayer powerless and an answer impossible. With many Christians there is a conflict between the life and prayer, and the life holds the upper hand. But prayer can also exercise a mighty influence over the life. If 1 give myself entirely to God in prayer, then prayer can conquer the life of the flesh and sin. The entire life may be brought under the control of prayer. Prayer can change and renew the whole life, because prayer calls in and receives the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit to purify and sanctify the life.

Many think that they must, with their defective spiritual life, work themselves up to pray more. They do not understand that only in proportion as the spiritual life is strengthened can the prayer life increase. Prayer and life are inseparably connected. What do you think? Which has the stronger influence over you, prayer for five or ten minutes, or the whole day spent in the desires of the world? Let it not surprise you if your prayers are not answered. The reason may easily lie here; your life and your prayer are at strife with each other; your heart is more wholly devoted to living than to prayer. Learn this great lesson: my prayer must rule my whole life. What I request from God in prayer is not decided in five or ten minutes. 1 must learn to say: 'I have prayed with my whole heart. 'What I desire from God must really fill my heart the whole day; then the way is open for a certain answer.

Oh, the sacredness and power of prayer, if it takes possession of the heart and life! It keeps one constantly in fellowship with God. We can then literally say, 'On thee do I wait all the day' (Ps. 25.5). Let us be careful to consider not only the length of the time we spend with God in prayer, but the power with which our prayer takes

possession of our whole life.

Perseverance in Prayer

'It is not reason,' said Peter, 'that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables' (Acts 6.2). For that work deacons were chosen. And this word of Peter serves for all time and for all who are set apart as ministers. 'But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word' (Acts 6.4). Dr Alexander Whyte, in an address, once said: 'I think sometimes, when my salary is paid to me so faithfully and punctually: the deacons have performed faithfully their part of the agreement; have I been so faithful in my part, in persevering in prayer and the ministry of the word?' Another minister has said: 'How surprised people would be if I proposed to divide my time between these two equallyone half given to prayer, the other to the ministry of the word!'

Notice, in the case of Peter, what perseverance in prayer meant. He went up on the roof to pray. There, in prayer, he received heavenly instruction as to his work among the heathen. There, the message from Cornelius came to him. There, the Holy Spirit said to him: 'Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them' (Acts 10. 19-20). And from there he went to Caesarea, where the Spirit was so unexpectedly outpoured on the heathen. All this is to teach us that it is through prayer God will give the instruction of his Spirit to make us understand his will, to let us know with whom we are to speak, to give us the assurance that his Spirit will make his word powerful through us.

Have you ever earnestly thought over why it is that you have a salary and a parsonage, and are set free from the need of following earthly business? It is for nothing else than that you should continue in prayer and the ministry of the word. That will be your wisdom and power. That will be the secret of a blessed service of the gospel.

No wonder that there is complaint about the ineffective spiritual life in minister and congregation, while that which is of prime importance, perseverance in prayer, does not hold its rightful place-the first place.

Peter was able to speak and act as he did because he was filled with the Spirit. Let us not be satisfied with anything less than hearty surrender to and undivided appropriation of the Spirit, as leader and Lord of our lives. Nothing less will help us. Then, for the first time, we shall be able to say that God 'hath made us able ministers ... of his Spirit' (2 Cor. 3.6).

Carnal or Spiritual?

There is a great difference between those two states which is but little understood or pondered. The Christian who 'walks in the Spirit' and has 'crucified the flesh' (Gal. 5.24) is spiritual. The Christian who walks after the flesh and wishes to please the flesh is carnal (see Rom. 13.14). The Galatians, who had begun in the Spirit, were ending in the flesh. Yet there were among them some spiritual members who were able to restore the wandering with meekness.

What a difference between the carnal and the spiritual Christian (I Cor. 3.1-3)! With the carnal Christian there may be much religion and much zeal for God, and for the service of God. But it is for the most part in human power. With the spiritual, on the other hand, there is a complete subjection to the leading of the Spirit, a deep sense of weakness and entire dependence on the work of Christ-it is a life of abiding fellowship with Christ, wrought out by the Spirit.

How important for me it is to find out and plainly to acknowledge before God whether I am spiritual or carnal! A minister may be very faithful in his orthodoxy, and be most zealous in his service, and yet be so, chiefly, in the

power of human wisdom and zeal. And one of the signs of this is that there is little pleasure or perseverance in fellowship with Christ through prayer. Love of prayer is one of the marks of the Spirit.

What a change is necessary for a Christian who is chiefly carnal to become truly spiritual! At first he cannot understand what must happen, or how it can come to pass. The more the truth dawns upon him, the more he is convinced that it is impossible, unless God does it. Yet to believe truly that God will do it requires earnest prayer. Quiet retirement and meditation are indispensable, along with the death of all confidence in ourselves. But along this road there ever comes the faith that God can, God is willing, God will do it. The soul which earnestly clings to the Lord Jesus will be led by the Spirit to this faith.

How will you be able to say to others: I brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ'? (1 Cor. 3. 1). It is impossible unless you yourself have the experience of having passed from the one state to the other. But God will teach you. Persevere in prayer and faith.

Chapter 13

George Mueller; Hudson Taylor; Light from the Inner Chamber

Just as God gave the apostle Paul as an example in his prayer life for Christians of all time, so he has also given George Mueller in these latter days as a proof to his church how literally and wonderfully he still always hears prayer. It is not only that he gave him in his lifetime over a million pounds sterling to support his orphanages, but Mr Mueller also stated that he believed that the Lord had given him more than thirty thousand souls in answer to prayer. And that not only from among orphans, but also many others for whom he (in some cases for fifty years) had prayed faithfully every day, in the firm faith that they would be saved. When he was asked on what ground he so firmly believed this, his answer was: 'There are five conditions which I always endeavour to fulfil, in observing which I have the assurance of answer to my prayer:

1. I have not the least doubt because I am assured that it is the Lord's will to save them, for he willeth that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (see 1 Tim. 2.4); and we have the assurance 'that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us' (1 John 5.14).

2. I have never pleaded for their salvation in my own name, but in the blessed name of my precious Lord Jesus, and on his merits alone (see John 14.14).

3. I always firmly believed in the willingness of God to hear my prayers (see Mark 11.24).

4. I am not conscious of having yielded to any sin, for 'if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me' when I call (Ps. 66.18).

5. I have persevered in believing prayer for more than fiftytwo years for some, and shall continue till the answer comes: 'Shall not God avenge his own elect which cry day and night unto him?' (Luke 18.7).

Take these thoughts into your hearts and practice prayer according to these rules. Let prayer be not only the utterance of your desires, but a fellowship with God, till we know by faith that our prayer is heard. The way George Mueller walked is the new and living way to the throne of grace, which is open for us all.

Hudson Taylor

When Hudson Taylor, as a young man, had given himself over unreservedly to the Lord, there came to him a strong conviction that God would send him to China. He had read of George Mueller and how God had answered his prayers for his own support and that of his orphans, and he began to ask the Lord to teach him also so to trust him. He felt that if he would go to China with such faith, he must first begin to live by faith in England. He asked the Lord to enable him to do this. He had a position as a doctor's dispenser, and asked God to help him not to ask for his salary, but to leave it to God to move the heart of the doctor to pay him at the right time. The doctor was a good-hearted man, but very irregular in payment. This cost Taylor much trouble and struggle in prayer because he believed, as did George Mueller, that the word, 'Owe no man any thing' (Rom. 13.8), was to be taken literally, and that debt should not be incurred.

So he learned the great lesson to move men through God - a thought of deep meaning, which later on became an unspeakably great blessing to him in his work in China. He relied on that - in the conversion of the Chinese, in the awakening of Christians to give money for the support of the work, in the finding of suitable missionaries who

would hold as faith's rule of conduct that we should make our desires known to God in prayer and then rely on God to move men to do what he would have done.

After he had been for some years in China, he prayed that God would give twenty-four missionaries, two for each of the eleven provinces and Mongolia, each with millions of souls and with no missionary. God did it. But there was no society to send them out. He had indeed learned to trust God for his own support, but he dared not take upon himself the responsibility of the twentyfour, if possibly they had not sufficient faith. This cost him severe conflict, and he became very ill under it, till at last he saw that God could as easily care for the twenty-four as for himself. He undertook it in a glad faith. And so God led him, through many severe trials of faith, to trust him fully. Now these twenty-four have increased, in course of time, to a thousand missionaries who rely wholly on God for support. Other missionary societies have acknowledged how much they have learned from Hudson Taylor, as a man who stated and obeyed this law. Faith may rely on God to move men to do what his children have asked of him in prayer.

Read the book, Hudson Taylor's Early Years by Dr and Mrs Howard Taylor. There will be found in it a treasure of spiritual thought and experience concerning a close walk with God in the inner chamber and in mission work.

Light from the Inner Chamber

'But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly' (Matt. 6.6).

Our Lord had spoken of the prayer of the hypocrites who desire to be seen of men and also of the prayer of the heathen who trust in the multitude of their words. They do not understand that prayer has no value except it is addressed to a personal God who sees and hears. In the text our Lord teaches us a wonderful lesson concerning the inestimable blessing which the Christian may have in his inner chamber. If we would understand the lesson aright we must notice the light that the inner chamber sheds on

1. The wonderful love of God

Think of God, his greatness, his holiness, his unspeakable glory, and then on the inestimable privilege to which he invites his children, that each one of them, however sinful or feeble he may be, every hour of the day, may have access to him and hold converse with him as long as he wishes. If he enters his inner chamber, then God is ready to meet him, to have fellowship with him, to give him the joy and strength which he needs with the living assurance in his heart that he is with him and will undertake for him in everything. In addition he promises that he will enrich him in his outward life and work with those things which he has asked for in secret. Ought we not to cry out with joy? What an honour! What a salvation! What an overflowing supply for every need!

One may be in the greatest distress, or may have fallen into the deepest sin, or may in the ordinary course of life desire temporal or spiritual blessing; he may desire to pray for himself or for those belonging to him, or for his congregation or church; he may even become an intercessor for the whole world - the promise for the inner chamber covers all: 'Pray to thy Father which is in secret; he will reward thee openly.'

We might well suppose that there would be no place on earth so attractive to the child of God as the inner chamber with the presence of God promised, where he may have unhindered intercourse with the Father. The happiness of a child on earth if he enjoys the love of his father; the happiness of a friend as he meets a beloved benefactor; the happiness of a subject who has free access to his king and may stay with him as long as he wishes; these are as nothing compared with this heavenly promise. In the inner chamber you can converse with your God

as long and as intimately as you desire; you can rely on his presence and fellowship.

Oh, the wonderful love of God in the gift of an inner chamber sanctified by such a promise! Let us thank God every day of our lives for it as the gift of his wonderful love. In this sinful world he could devise nothing more suitable for our needs than a fountain of unspeakable blessing.

2. The deep sinfulness of man

We might have thought that every child of God would have availed himself with joy of such an invitation. But, see! What is the response? There comes a cry from all lands that prayer in the inner chamber is, as a general rule, neglected by those who call themselves believers - . Many make no use of it; they go to church, they confess Christ, but they know little of personal intercourse with God. Many make a little use of it, but in a spirit of haste, and more as a matter of custom, or for the easing of conscience, so that they cannot speak of any joy or blessing in it. And, what is more sad, many who know something of its blessedness confess that they know little about faithful, regular, and happy fellowship with the Father, all the day, as something which is as necessary as their daily bread.

Oh, what is it, then, that makes the inner chamber so powerless? Is it not the deep sinfulness of man, and the aversion of his fallen nature for God, which make the world with its fellowship more attractive than being alone with the heavenly Father?

Is it not that Christians do believe the word of God, where that word declares that 'the flesh' which is in them, 'is enmity against God', and that they walk too much after 'the flesh', so that the Spirit cannot strengthen them for prayer? Is it not that Christians allow themselves to be deprived by Satan of the use of the weapon of prayer, so that they are powerless to overcome him? Oh, the deep sinfulness of man! We have no greater proof of it than this despite that is done to the unspeakable love which has given us the inner chamber.

And what is still more sad is that even ministers of Christ acknowledge that they know they pray too little. The word tells them that their only power lies in prayer: through that only, but through that certainly, they can be clothed with power from on high for their work. But it seems as though the power of the world and the flesh has bewitched them. While they devote time to and manifest zeal in their work, that which is the most necessary of all is neglected, and there is not the desire or strength for prayer to obtain the indispensable gift of the Holy Spirit to make their work fruitful. God give us grace to understand in the light of the inner chamber the deep sinfulness of our nature.

3. The glorious grace of Christ Jesus

Is there, then, no hope of a change? Must it be always thus? Or is there a means of recovery? Thank God! There is.

The man through whom God has made known to us the message of the inner chamber is no other than our Lord Jesus Christ, who saves us from our sins. He is able and willing to deliver us from this sin, and will deliver. He has not undertaken to redeem us from all our other sins and left us to deal with the sin of prayerlessness in our own strength. No, in this also we may come to him and cry out, 'Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean' (Matt. 8.2). 'Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbefief' (Mark 9.24).

Do you wish to know how you may experience this deliverance? By none other than the well-known way along which every sinner must come to Christ. Begin by acknowledging, by confessing before him, in a childlike and

simple manner, the sin of neglecting and desecrating the inner chamber. Bow before him in deep shame and sorrow. Tell him that your heart has deceived you by the thought that you could pray as you ought. Tell him that through the weakness of 'the flesh', and the power of the world, and self-confidence, you have been led astray and that you have no strength to do better. Let this be done heartily. You cannot by your resolution and effort put things right.

Come in your sin and weakness to the inner chamber, and begin to thank God, as you have never thanked him, that the grace of the Lord Jesus will surely make it possible for you to converse with your Father as a child ought to do. Hand over afresh to the Lord Jesus all your sin and misery, as well as your whole life and will, that he may cleanse and take possession of you and rule over you as his very own.

Even though your heart be cold and dead, persevere in the exercise of faith that Christ is an almighty and faithful Saviour. You may be sure that deliverance will come. Expect it, and you will begin to understand that the inner chamber is the revelation of the glorious grace of the Lord Jesus, which makes it possible for one to do what he could not do himself; that is, to hold fellowship with God, and to experience that the desire and power are received which fit a man for walking with God.

Chapter 14

The Cross Spirit in Our Lord

We seek sometimes for the operation of the Spirit, with the object of obtaining more power for work, more love in the life, more holiness in the heart, more light on Scripture or on our path. And yet all these gifts are only subordinate to what is the great purpose of God. The Father has bestowed the Spirit on the Son, and the Son has given him to us, with the one great object of revealing and glorifying Christ Jesus himself in us.

The heavenly Christ must become for us a real living personality, always with us and in us. Our life on earth must be every day lived in the unbroken and holy fellowship of our Lord Jesus in heaven. This must be the first and the greatest work of the Holy Spirit in believers, that they should know and experience Christ as the life of their life. God desires that we should become strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith, and that so we may be filled with his love unto all the fullness of God.

This was the secret of the joy of the first disciples. They had received the Lord Jesus, whom they feared they had lost, as the heavenly Christ into their hearts.

And this was their preparation for Pentecost: they were entirely taken up with him. He was literally their all. Their hearts were empty of everything, so that the Spirit might fill them with Christ. In the fullness of the Spirit they had power for a life and service such as the Lord desired. Is this, now, with us, the great object in our desires, in our prayers, in our experience? 'Me Lord teach us to know that the blessing for which we have so earnestly prayed can be preserved and increased in no other way than through intimate fellowship with Christ in the inner chamber, every day practised and cultivated.

And yet it has seemed to me that there was a still deeper secret of Pentecost to be discovered. The thought came that perhaps our conception of the Lord Jesus in heaven was limited. We think of him in the splendour, the glory of God's throne. We also think of the unsearchable love which moved him to give himself for us. But we forgot too often that, above all, it is as the crucified one he was known here on earth; and that, above all, it is as the crucified one he has his place on the throne of God. 'And, lo, in the midst of the throne ... stood a Lamb as it had been slain' (Rev. 5.6).

Yes, it is as the crucified one that he is the object of the Father's eternal good pleasure and of the worship of the entire creation. And it is, therefore, of the first importance, that we here on earth should know and have experience of him as the crucified one, so that we may make men see what his disposition and ours is, and what the power is that can make them partakers of salvation.

I feel deeply that, as the cross is Christ's highest glory, and as the Holy Spirit neither has done nor can do anything greater or more glorious than he did when he 'through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God' (Heb. 9.14); so it is evident that the Holy Spirit can do nothing greater or more glorious for us than to take us up into the fellowship of that cross, and to work out also in us the same spirit of the cross which was seen in our Lord Jesus. In a word, the question arose whether this was not the real reason why our prayers for the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit could not be answered, because we had sought too little to receive the Spirit, in order that we might know and become like the glorified Christ in the fellowship of his cross.

Have we not here the deepest secret of Pentecost? The Spirit comes to us from the cross, where he strengthened

Christ to offer himself to God. He comes from the Father, who looked down with unspeakable good pleasure on the humiliation and obedience and self-sacrifice of Christ, as the highest proof of his surrender to him. He comes from Christ, who through the cross was prepared to receive from the Father the fullness of the Spirit, that he might share it with the world. He comes to reveal Christ to our hearts, as the Lamb slain, in the midst of the throne, so that we on earth may worship him as they do in heaven. He comes, chiefly,- to impart to us the life of the crucified Christ, so that we may be able to say truly, 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not 1, but Christ liveth in me' (Gal. 2.20).

To understand this secret in any way, we must first meditate on what the meaning and what the worth of the cross is.

The mind that was in the crucified Christ

The cross must necessarily be viewed from two standpoints. First, the work it has accomplished - the pardon and conquest of sin. This is the first message with which the cross comes to the sinner. It proclaims to him free and full deliverance from the power of sin. And then the second, the spirit or disposition which was there manifested. We find this expressed in Philippians 2.8: 'He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' Here we see self-abasement to the lowest place which could be found under the burden of our sin and curse; obedience to the uttermost to all the will of God; self-sacrifice to the death of the cross these three words reveal to us the holy perfection of his person and work. Therefore God hath so greatly exalted him. It was the spirit of the cross which made him the object of his Father's good pleasure, of the worship of the angels, of the love and confidence of all the redeemed. The self-abasement of Christ, his obedience to the will of God even to death, his self-sacrifice even to the death of the cross - these made him to be 'the Lamb, as it had been slain, standing in the midst of the throne'.

The spirit of the cross in us

All that Christ was, he was for us and desires to become in us. The spirit of the cross was his blessedness and glory. It should be this even more for us. He desires to manifest his likeness in us and to give us a full share of all that is his. Thus Paul writes the words we have so often quoted: 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus' (Phil. 2.5). Elsewhere he writes: 'We have the mind of Christ' (1 Cor. 2.16). The fellowship of the cross is not only a holy duty for us, but an unspeakably blessed privilege, which the Holy Spirit himself will make ours according to the promise: 'He shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you' (John 16.15); 'He shall glorify me' (John 16.14). The Holy Spirit wrought this disposition in Christ and will also work it in us.

Chapter 15

Taking Up the Cross

When the Lord told his disciples that they must take up the cross to follow him, they could have little understanding of his meaning. He wished to rouse them to earnest thought and so prepare them for the time when they should see him carrying his cross. From the Jordan, where he had presented himself to be baptised and reckoned among sinners, onward, he carried the cross always in his heart. That is to say, he was always conscious that the sentence of death, because of sin, rested on him, and that he must bear it to the uttermost. As the disciples thought on this and wondered what he meant by it, one thing only helped them - it was the thought of a man who was sentenced to death, and carried his cross to the appointed place.

Christ had said at the same time: 'He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it' (Matt. 10.39). He taught them that they must hate their own life. Their nature was so sinful that nothing less than death could meet their need; it deserved nothing less than death. So the conviction gradually dawned upon them that the taking up of the cross meant: 'I am to feel that my life is under sentence of death, and that under the consciousness of this sentence I must constantly surrender my flesh, my sinful nature, to death.' So they were slowly prepared to see later on that the cross which Christ had carried was the one power to deliver truly from sin, and that they must first receive from him the true cross spirit. They must learn from him what self-humiliation in their weakness and unworthiness was to mean; what the obedience was which crucified their own will in all things, in the greatest as well as in the least; what the self-denial was which did not seek to please the flesh or the world. 'Take thy cross and follow me' (see Matt. 16.24; Mark 8.34; 10.21; Luke 9.23) - that was the word with which Jesus prepared his disciples for the great thought that his mind and disposition might become theirs, that his cross might in very deed become their own.

Crucified with Christ

The lesson which the Lord wished his disciples to learn from his statement concerning the taking up of the cross and the losing of their life finds its expression in the words of Paul, after Christ had died on the cross and had been exalted on high, and the Spirit had been poured out. Paul says: 'I am crucified with Christ'; 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world' (Gal. 2.20; 6.14). He wished every believer to live so as to prove that he was crucified with Christ. He wished us to understand that the Christ who comes to dwell in our hearts is the crucified Christ, who will himself, through his life, impart to us the true mind of the cross. He tells us that 'our old man is crucified with him' (Rom. 6.6). Yea, more, that 'they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh' (Gal. 5.24). When they received by faith the crucified Christ, they gave over the flesh to the death sentence which was executed to the full on Calvary. Paul says 'we have been planted together in the likeness of his death' (Rom. 6.5), and that therefore we must reckon that we are dead to sin in Christ Jesus.

These words of the Holy Spirit, through Paul, teach us that we must abide constantly in the fellowship of the cross, in fellowship with the crucified and living Lord Jesus. It is the soul that lives ever under the cover and shelter and deliverance of the cross that alone can expect constantly to glory in Christ Jesus and in his abiding nearness.

The fellowship of the cross

There are many who place their hope for salvation in the redemption of the cross who understand little about the fellowship of the cross. They rely on what the cross has purchased for them, on forgiveness of sin and peace with God; but they can often live for a length of time without fellowship with the Lord himself. They do not know what it means to strive every day after heart communion with the crucified Lord as he is seen in heaven -'A Lamb in the midst of the throne'. Oh, that this vision might exercise its spiritual power upon us, that we might really experience every day that as truly as the Lamb is seen there on the throne, so we may have the power and experience of his presence here!

Is it possible? Without doubt it is. Why did that great miracle happen, and why was the Holy Spirit given from heaven, if it were not to make the glorified Jesus -'the Lamb standing, as slain, in the midst of the throne'- present with us here in our earthly surroundings? Let us endeavour to make this more plain in our further meditations.

Chapter 16

The Holy Spirit and the Cross

The Holy Spirit ever leads us to the cross. It was so with Christ. The Spirit taught him and enabled him to offer himself without spot to God.

It was so with the disciples. The Spirit, with whom they were filled, led them to preach Christ as the crucified one. Late on he led them to glory in the fellowship of the cross when they were deemed worthy to suffer for Christ's sake.

And the cross directed them again to the Spirit. When Christ had borne the cross, he received the Spirit from the Father, that he might be poured out. When the three thousand bowed before the crucified one, they received the promise of the Holy Spirit. When the disciples rejoiced in their experience of the fellowship of the cross, they received the Holy Spirit afresh. The union between the Spirit and the cross is indissoluble; they belong inseparably to one another. We see this especially in the epistles of Paul. 'Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you... Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?' (Gal. 3.1, 2).

'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law ... that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith' (Gal. 3.13, 14). 'God sent forth his Son ... To redeem them that were under the law ... and ... hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts' (Gal. 4.4-6). 'And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh ... . If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit' (Gal. 5.24, 25). 'Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ ... that we should serve in newness of spirit' (Rom. 7.4-6). 'For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For ... God ... condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit' (Rom. 8.24).

In everything and always the Spirit and the cross are inseparable. Yes, even in heaven. The Lamb, as it had been slain, standing in the midst of the throne had 'seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth' (Rev. 5.6). Again: 'He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal [Is this other than the Holy Spirit?] proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb' (Rev. 22. 1). When Moses smote the rock, the water streamed out and Israel drank. When the Rock Christ was actually smitten and he had taken his place as the slain Lamb on the throne of God, there flowed out from under the throne the fullness of the Holy Spirit for the whole world.

How foolish it is to pray for the fullness of the Spirit if we have not first placed ourselves under the full power of the cross! Just think of the one hundred and twenty disciples. The crucifixion of Christ had touched, broken, and taken possession of their entire hearts. They could speak or think of nothing else, and when the crucified one had shown them his hands and his feet, he said unto them: 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost' (John 20.22). And so also, with their hearts full of the crucified Christ, now received up into heaven, they were prepared to be filled with the Spirit. They dared to proclaim to the people: 'Repent and believe in the crucified one'; and they also received the Holy Spirit.

Christ gave himself up entirely to the cross. 'The disciples also did the same. The cross demands this also from us; it would have our entire life. To comply with this demand requires nothing less than a powerful act of the will, for which we are unfit, and a powerful act of God of which he may be assured who casts himself, in helplessness, but unreservedly on God.

The Spirit and the Cross

Why are there not more men and women who can witness, in the joy of their hearts, that the Spirit of God has taken possession of them and given them new power to witness for him? Yet more urgently arises the heartsearching question to which an answer must be given: what is it that hinders? The Father in heaven is more willing than an earthly father to give bread to his child, and yet the cry arises: 'Is the Spirit straitened? Is this his work?'

Many will acknowledge that the hindrance undoubtedly lies in the fact that the Church is too much under the sway of the flesh and the world. They understand too little of the heartpiercing power of the cross of Christ. So it comes to pass that the Spirit has not the vessels into which he can pour his fullness.

Many complain that the subject is too high or too deep for them. This is a proof of how little we have appropriated and brought into practice the teaching of Paul and Christ about the cross. I bring you a message of joy. The Spirit who is in you, in however limited a measure, is prepared to take you under his teaching, to lead you to the cross, and by his heavenly instruction to make you now something of what the crucified Christ wills to do for you and in you.

But then he wants you to take time, so that he may reveal the heavenly mysteries to you. He wants to make you see how the neglect of the inner chamber has hindered fellowship with Christ, the knowledge of the cross, and the powerful operations of the Spirit. He will teach you what is meant by the denial of self, the taking up of your cross, the losing of your life, and following him.

In spite of all that you have felt of your ignorance, and lack of spiritual insight and fellowship with the cross, he is able and willing to take you under his teaching and to make known to you the secret of the spiritual life above all your expectations.

Begin at the beginning. Be faithful in the inner chamber. Thank him that you can reckon on him to meet you there. Although everything appears cold, and dark, and strained, bow in silence before the loving Lord Jesus, who so longs after you. Thank the Father that he has given you the Spirit. And be assured that all you do not yet know, and still must know - about 'the flesh', and 'the world', and the cross - the Spirit of Christ, who is in you, will surely make known to you. 0 soul, only believe that this blessing is for you! Christ belongs entirely to you. He longs to obtain full possession of you. He can and will possess you through the Holy Spirit. But for this, time is necessary. Oh, give him time in the inner chamber every day. You can rest assured that he will fulfil his promise in you. 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and 1 will love him, and will manifest myself to him' (John 14.21).

Persevere, in addition to all that you ask for yourself, in prayer for your congregation, your church, your minister; for all believers; for the whole Church of God, that God may strengthen them with power through his Spirit, so that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith. Blessed time when the answer comes! Continue in prayer. The Spirit will reveal and glorify Christ and his love, Christ and his cross 'as the Lamb slain standing in the midst of the throne'.

The Cross and the Flesh

These two are deadly enemies. The cross desires to condemn and put to death 'the flesh'. 'The flesh' desires to cast aside and conquer the cross. Many, as they hear of the cross as the indispensable preparation for the fullness of the

Holy Spirit, will find out what there is in them which must yet be crucified. We must understand that our entire nature is sentenced to death and must become dead by the cross, so that the new life in Christ may come to rule in us. We must obtain such an insight into the fallen condition of our nature and its enmity against God that we become willing, nay desirous, to be wholly freed from it.

We must learn to say with Paul: 'In me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing' (Rom. 7.18). 'The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be' (Rom. 8.7). It is its very essence to hate God and his holy law. This is the wonder of redemption, that Christ has borne on the cross the judgment and curse of God on 'the flesh', and has forever nailed it to the cursed tree. If a man only believes God's word about this 'cursed mind of the flesh', and then longs to be delivered from it, he learns to love the cross as his deliverer from the power of the enemy.

'Our old man is crucified' with Christ, and our one hope is to receive this by faith and to hold it fast. 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh' (Gal. 5.24). They have willingly declared that they will daily regard 'the flesh' which is in them as the enemy of God, the enemy of Christ, the enemy of their soul's salvation, and will treat it as having received its deserved reward in being nailed to the cross.

This is one part of the eternal redemption which Christ has brought to us. It is not something which we can grasp with our understanding or accomplish with our strength. It is something which the Lord Jesus himself will give us if we are willing to abide in his fellowship day by day, and to receive everything from him. It is something which the Holy Spirit will teach us, and he will impart it to us as an experience, and will show how he can give victory in the power of the cross over all that is of the flesh.

The Cross and the World

What the flesh is in the smallest circle of my own person, that the world is in the larger circle of mankind. 'The flesh' and 'the world' are two manifestations of the same 'god of this world who is served by both. When the cross deals with 'the flesh' as accursed, we at once discover what the nature and power of the world are. 'They ... hated both me and my Father' (John 15.24). The proof of this was that they crucified Christ. But Christ obtained the victory on the cross and freed us from the power of 'the world'. And now we can say: 'God forbid that 1 should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world' (Gal. 4.14).

The cross was to Paul every day a holy reality, both in what he had to suffer from the world and in the victory which the cross constantly gave. John also writes: 'The whole world lieth in wickedness' (1 John 5.19). 'Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ ... And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth' (1 John 5.5, 6). Against the two great powers of the god of this world, God has given us two great powers from heaven, namely, the cross and the Spirit. greatest victory with his hands and feet nailed to the cross. We abide in the shadow of the

Chapter 17

A Testimony & An Epilogue

A Testimony

In the following quotations from Starlight, by G. Sterrenberg, the great truth about the cross is expressed in simple and powerful words. Let the chapters on 'The Fellowship of the Cross' and 'The Holy Spirit and the Cross' especially be read.

Our Head Christ took the lowest place on the cross, and so He has marked out for us His members the lowest place. The brightness of God's glory (Heb. 1.3) became the rejected of men (Isa. 53.3). Since that time the only right we have is to be the last and the lowest. When we claim anything more we have not yet rightly understood the cross.

We seek for a higher life; we shall find it if we sink deeper into the cross fellowship with our Lord. God has given the crucified One the highest place (Rev. 5). Shall we not do the same? We do this when from hour to hour we act as those who are crucified with him (Gal. 2.19, 20). Thus we honor the crucified Lord.

We long for full victory. We find this as we more fully enter into the fellowship of His cross. The Lamb obtained His Almighty only so long as we abide under the shadow of the cross. The cross must be our home. There alone are we sheltered. We first understand our own cross when we have understood his. And we desire to get so close to it that we not only view it but touch it, yes, still more that we take up the cross, and so it becomes as someone has said, an inner cross. Then the cross asserts itself in us, and we experience His power which especially manifests itself in this, that we do not faint under it but carry it with joy.

What would Jesus be without His cross? His pierced feet have bruised the head of the enemy, and His pierced hands have despoiled him utterly (Matt. 12.29). What are we without the cross? Do not let the cross go, but hold it fast. Do we think that we can go by another road than that He trod? Many can make no progress because they will not take up the cross.

Epilogue

A single word to the reader concerning the disposition of mind to which this book appeals! It is not enough that one should understand and appropriate the thought of the writer, and then rejoice because of the new insight he has obtained and the pleasure which knowledge has brought. There is something else which is of great importance. 1 must surrender myself to the truth so that I shall be ready, with an undivided will, immediately to perform all that 1 shall learn to be God's will.

In a book such as this, dealing with the life of prayer and hidden fellowship with God, it is indispensable that we should be prepared to receive and obey all that we see to be according to the word and will of God. Where this disposition is lacking, knowledge only serves to make the heart less capable of receiving fuller life. Satan endeavours to become master of the Christian's inner chamber because he knows that if there has been unfaithfulness in prayer the testimony will bring but little loss to his kingdom. Spiritual power to lead the unsaved to the Lord, or to build up the children of God, will not be experienced under it. Persevering prayer, through which alone this power comes, has been lacking.

The great living question has been before many: shall we really set ourselves to win back again the weapon of believing prayer which Satan has, in a measure, taken away from us? Let us set before ourselves the serious importance of this conflict. As far as each minister is concerned, everything depends on whether or not he is a man of prayer-one who in the inner chamber must be clothed each day with power from on high. We, in common with the church throughout the whole world, have to complain that prayer has not the place in our service of God that it ought to have, according to the will and promise of God and according to the need of minister and congregation and church.

The public consecration which many a believer has been led to make of himself at conferences is not an easy thing. And even when the step is taken, old custom, and the power of the flesh, will tend to bring it to naught. The power of faith is not yet vigorous. It will cost strife and sacrifice to conquer the devil in the name of Christ. Our churches are the battlefield where Satan will bring forth all his power to prevent us from becoming men of prayer, powerful in the Lord to obtain the victory in heaven and on earth. How much depends on this for ourselves, for our congregations, and for the kingdom!

Do not be surprised if I say that it is with fear and trembling, and not without much prayer, that I have written what 1 trust will help to encourage the brethren in the conflict. It is with a feeling of deep unworthiness that 1 venture to offer myself as a guide to the inner chamber, which is the way to holiness and to fellowship with God.

Do not wonder that I have asked the Lord that he would give this book a place in some inner chambers, and that he may assist the reader, so that, as he sees what God's will is, he may immediately give himself up to the doing of it. In war, everything depends on each soldier being obedient to the word of command, even though it costs him his life. In our strife with Satan we shall not conquer unless each one of us holds himself ready even in the reading of this simple book, to say from the heart: 'What God says I will do; and if I see that anything is according to his will, I will immediately receive it and act upon it.'

Do not wonder that I have written this testimony to remind the brethren that everything depends on the spirit of surrender to immediate obedience, in which we read all that is said according to the word of God. God grant that, in his great grace, this book may prove a bond of fellowship by which we may think of and help one another, and strengthen each other for the conflict in prayer by which the enemy may be overcome and the life of God may be gloriously revealed!

With Christ in the School of Prayer

by

Andrew Murray

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WITH CHRIST

In the School of Prayer

Thoughts on Our Training

for the

Ministry of Intercession

BY

REV. ANDREW MURRAY

Lord, teach us to pray.

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PREFACE.

Of all the promises connected with the command, 'ABIDE IN ME,' there is none higher, and none that sooner brings the confession, 'Not that I have already attained, or am already made perfect,' than this: 'If ye abide in me, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' Power with God is the highest attainment of the life of full abiding.

And of all the traits of a life LIKE CHRIST there is none higher and more glorious than conformity to Him in the work that now engages Him without ceasing in the Father's presence—His all-prevailing intercession. The more we abide in Him, and grow unto His likeness, will His priestly life work in us mightily, and our life become what His is, a life that ever pleads and prevails for men.

'Thou hast made us kings and priests unto God.' Both in the king and the priest the chief thing is power, influence, blessing. In the king it is the power coming downward; in the priest, the power rising upward, prevailing with God. In our blessed Priest-King, Jesus Christ, the kingly power is founded on the priestly 'He is able to save to the uttermost, because He ever liveth to make intercession.' In us, His priests and kings, it is no otherwise: it is in intercession that the Church is to find and wield its highest power, that each member of the Church is to prove his descent from Israel, who as a prince had power with God and with men, and prevailed.

It is under a deep impression that the place and power of prayer in the Christian life is too little understood, that this book has been written. I feel sure that as long as we look on prayer chiefly as the means of maintaining our own Christian life, we shall not know fully what it is meant to be. But when we learn to regard it as the highest part of the work entrusted to us, the root and strength of all other work, we shall see that there is nothing that we so need to study and practise as the art of praying aright. If I have at all succeeded in pointing out the progressive teaching of our Lord in regard to prayer, and the distinct reference the wonderful promises of the last night (John xiv. 16) have to the works we are to do in His Name, to the greater works, and to the bearing much fruit, we shall all admit that it is only when the Church gives herself up to this holy work of intercession that we can expect the power of Christ to manifest itself in her behalf. It is my prayer that God may use this little book to make clearer to some of His children the wonderful place of power and influence which He is waiting for them to occupy, and for which a weary world is waiting too.

In connection with this there is another truth that has come to me with wonderful clearness as I studied the teaching of Jesus on prayer. It is this: that the Father waits to hear every prayer of faith, to give us whatsoever we will, and whatsoever we ask in Jesus' name. We have become so accustomed to limit the wonderful love and the large promises of our God, that we cannot read the simplest and clearest statements of our Lord without the qualifying clauses by which we guard and expound them. If there is one thing I think the Church needs to learn, it is that God means prayer to have an answer, and that it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive what God will do for His child who gives himself to believe that his prayer will be heard. God hears prayer; this is a truth universally admitted, but of which very few understand the meaning, or experience the power. If what I have written stir my reader to go to the Master's words, and take His wondrous promises simply and literally as they stand, my object has been attained.

And then just one thing more. Thousands have in these last years found an unspeakable blessing in learning how completely Christ is our life, and how He undertakes to be and to do all in us that we need. I know not if we have yet learned to apply this truth to our prayer-life. Many complain that they have not the power to pray in faith, to pray the effectual prayer that availeth much. The message I would fain bring them is that the blessed Jesus is waiting, is longing, to teach them this. Christ is our life: in heaven He ever liveth to pray; His life in us is an ever-

praying life, if we will but trust Him for it. Christ teaches us to pray not only by example, by instruction, by command, by promises, but by showing us HIMSELF, the ever-living Intercessor, as our Life. It is when we believe this, and go and abide in Him for our prayer-life too, that our fears of not being able to pray aright will vanish, and we shall joyfully and triumphantly trust our Lord to teach us to pray, to be Himself the life and the power of our prayer. May God open our eyes to see what the holy ministry of intercession is to which, as His royal priesthood, we have been set apart. May He give us a large and strong heart to believe what mighty influence our prayers can exert. And may all fear as to our being able to fulfil our vocation vanish as we see Jesus, living ever to pray, living in us to pray, and standing surety for our prayer-life.

ANDREW MURRAY
WELLINGTON, 28th October 1895

FIRST LESSON.

'Lord, teach us to pray;'
Or, The Only Teacher .

'And it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, that when He ceased, one of His disciples said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray.'—Luke xi. 1.

THE disciples had been with Christ, and seen Him pray. They had learnt to understand something of the connection between His wondrous life in public, and His secret life of prayer. They had learnt to believe in Him as a Master in the art of prayer—none could pray like Him. And so they came to Him with the request, 'Lord, teach us to pray.' And in after years they would have told us that there were few things more wonderful or blessed that He taught them than His lessons on prayer.

And now still it comes to pass, as He is praying in a certain place, that disciples who see Him thus engaged feel the need of repeating the same request, 'Lord, teach us to pray.' As we grow in the Christian life, the thought and the faith of the Beloved Master in His never-failing intercession becomes ever more precious, and the hope of being Like Christ in His intercession gains an attractiveness before unknown. And as we see Him pray, and remember that there is none who can pray like Him, and none who can teach like Him, we feel the petition of the disciples, 'Lord, teach us to pray,' is just what we need. And as we think how all He is and has, how He Himself is our very own, how He is Himself our life, we feel assured that we have but to ask, and He will be delighted to take us up into closer fellowship with Himself, and teach us to pray even as He prays.

Come, my brothers! Shall we not go to the Blessed Master and ask Him to enrol our names too anew in that school which He always keeps open for those who long to continue their studies in the Divine art of prayer and intercession? Yes, let us this very day say to the Master, as they did of old, 'Lord, teach us to pray.' As we meditate, we shall find each word of the petition we bring to be full of meaning.

'Lord, teach us to pray.' Yes, to pray. This is what we need to be taught. Though in its beginnings prayer is so simple that the feeblest child can pray, yet it is at the same time the highest and holiest work to which man can rise. It is fellowship with the Unseen and Most Holy One. The powers of the eternal world have been placed at its disposal. It is the very essence of true religion, the channel of all blessings, the secret of power and life. Not only for ourselves, but for others, for the Church, for the world, it is to prayer that God has given the right to take hold of Him and His strength. It is on prayer that the promises wait for their fulfilment, the kingdom for its coming, the glory of God for its full revelation. And for this blessed work, how slothful and unfit we are. It is only the Spirit of God can enable us to do it aright. How speedily we are deceived into a resting in the form, while the power is wanting. Our early training, the teaching of the Church, the influence of habit, the stirring of the emotions—how easily these lead to prayer which has no spiritual power, and avails but little. True prayer, that takes hold of God's strength, that availeth much, to which the gates of heaven are really opened wide—who would not cry, Oh for some one to teach me thus to pray?

Jesus has opened a school, in which He trains His redeemed ones, who specially desire it, to have power in prayer. Shall we not enter it with the petition, Lord! it is just this we need to be taught! O teach us to pray.

'Lord, teach us to pray.' Yes, us, Lord. We have read in They Word with what power Thy believing people of old used to pray, and what mighty wonders were done in answer to their prayers. And if this took place under the Old Covenant, in the time of preparation, how much more wilt Thou not now, in these days of fulfilment, give Thy people this sure sign of Thy presence in their midst. We have heard the promises given to Thine apostles of the power of prayer in Thy name, and have seen how gloriously they experienced their truth: we know for certain, they can become true to us too. We hear continually even in these days what glorious tokens of Thy power Thou dost still give to those who trust Thee fully. Lord! these all are men of like passions with ourselves; teach us to pray so too. The promises are for us, the powers and gifts of the heavenly world are for us. O teach us to pray so that we may receive abundantly. To us too Thou hast entrusted Thy work, on our prayer too the coming of Thy kingdom depends, in our prayer too Thou canst glorify Thy name; 'Lord teach us to pray.' Yes, us, Lord; we offer ourselves as learners; we would indeed be taught of Thee. 'Lord, teach us to pray.'

'Lord, teach us to pray.' Yes, we feel the need now of being taught to pray. At first there is no work appears so simple; later on, none that is more difficult; and the confession is forced from us: We know not how to pray as we ought. It is true we have God's Word,

with its clear and sure promises; but sin has so darkened our mind, that we know not always how to apply the word. In spiritual things we do not always seek the most needful things, or fail in praying according to the law of the sanctuary. In temporal things we are still less able to avail ourselves of the wonderful liberty our Father has given us to ask what we need. And even when we know what to ask, how much there is still needed to make prayer acceptable. It must be to the glory of God, in full surrender to His will, in full assurance of faith, in the name of Jesus, and with a perseverance that, if need be, refuses to be denied. All this must be learned. It can only be learned in the school of much prayer, for practice makes perfect. Amid the painful consciousness of ignorance and unworthiness, in the struggle between believing and doubting, the heavenly art of effectual prayer is learnt. Because, even when we do not remember it, there is One, the Beginner and Finisher of faith and prayer, who watches over our praying, and sees to it that in all who trust Him for it their education in the school of prayer shall be carried on to perfection. Let but the deep undertone of all our prayer be the teachableness that comes from a sense of ignorance, and from faith in Him as a perfect teacher, and we may be sure we shall be taught, we shall learn to pray in power. Yes, we may depend upon it, He teaches to pray.

'Lord, teach us to pray.' None can teach like Jesus, none but Jesus; therefore we call on Him, 'LORD, teach us to pray.' A pupil needs a teacher, who knows his work, who has the gift of teaching, who in patience and love will descend to the pupil's needs. Blessed be God! Jesus is all this and much more. He knows what prayer is. It is Jesus, praying Himself, who teaches to pray. He knows what prayer is. He learned it amid the trials and tears of His earthly life. In heaven it is still His beloved work: His life there is prayer. Nothing delights Him more than to find those whom He can take with Him into the Father's presence, whom He can clothe with power to pray down God's blessing on those around them, whom He can train to be His fellow-workers in the intercession by which the kingdom is to be revealed on earth. He knows how to teach. Now by the urgency of felt need, then by the confidence with which joy inspires. Here by the teaching of the Word, there by the testimony of another believer who knows what it is to have prayer heard. By His Holy Spirit, He has access to our heart, and teaches us to pray by showing us the sin that hinders the prayer, or giving us the assurance that we please God. He teaches, by giving not only thoughts of what to ask or how to ask, but by breathing within us the very spirit of prayer, by living within us as the Great Intercessor. We may indeed and most joyfully say, 'Who teacheth like Him?' Jesus never taught His disciples how to preach, only how to pray. He did not speak much of what was needed to preach well, but much of praying well. To know how to speak to God is more than knowing how to speak to man. Not power with men, but power with God is the first thing. Jesus loves to teach us how to pray.

What think you, my beloved fellow-disciples! would it not be just what we need, to ask the Master for a month to give us a course of special lessons on the art of prayer? As we meditate on the words He spake on earth, let us yield ourselves to His teaching in the fullest confidence that, with such a teacher, we shall make progress. Let us take time not only to meditate, but to pray, to tarry at the foot of the throne, and be trained to the work of intercession. Let us do so in the assurance that amidst our stammerings and fears He is carrying on His work most beautifully. He will breathe His own life, which is all prayer, into us. As He makes us partakers of His righteousness and His life, He will of His intercession. too. As the members of His body, as a holy priesthood, we shall take part in His priestly work of pleading and prevailing with God for men. Yes, let us most joyfully say, ignorant and feeble though we be, 'Lord, teach us to pray.'

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

Blessed Lord! who ever livest to pray, Thou canst teach me too to pray, me too to live ever to pray. In this Thou lovest to make me share Thy glory in heaven, that I should pray without ceasing, and ever stand as a priest in the presence of my God.

Lord Jesus! I ask Thee this day to enrol my name among those who confess that they know not how to pray as they ought, and specially ask Thee for a course of teaching in prayer. Lord! teach me to tarry with Thee in the school, and give Thee time to train me. May a deep sense of my ignorance, of the wonderful privilege and power of prayer, of the need of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of prayer, lead me to cast away my thoughts of what I think I know, and make me kneel before Thee in true teachableness and poverty of spirit.

And fill me, Lord, with the confidence that with such a teacher as Thou art I shall learn to pray. In the assurance that I have as my teacher, Jesus who is ever praying to the Father, and by His prayer rules the destinies of His Church and the world, I will not be afraid. As much as I need to know of the mysteries of the prayer-world, Thou wilt unfold for me. And when I may not know, Thou wilt teach me to be strong in faith, giving glory to God.

Blessed Lord! Thou wilt not put to shame Thy scholar who trusts Thee, nor, by Thy grace, would he Thee either. Amen.

SECOND LESSON.

‘In spirit and truth.’
Or, The True Worshippers.

The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth.’—John iv. 23, 24.

THESE words of Jesus to the woman of Samaria are His first recorded teaching on the subject of prayer. They give us some wonderful first glimpses into the world of prayer. The Father seeks worshippers: our worship satisfies His loving heart and is a joy to Him. He seeks true worshippers, but finds many not such as He would have them. True worship is that which is in spirit and truth. The Son has come to open the way for this worship in spirit and in truth, and teach it us. And so one of our first lessons in the school of prayer must be to understand what it is to pray in spirit and in truth, and to know how we can attain to it.

To the woman of Samaria our Lord spoke of a threefold worship. There is first, the ignorant worship of the Samaritans: ‘Ye worship that which ye know not.’ The second, the intelligent worship of the Jew, having the true knowledge of God: ‘We worship that which we know; for salvation is of the Jews.’ And then the new, the spiritual worship which He Himself has come to introduce: ‘The hour is coming, and is now, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth.’ From the connection it is evident that the words ‘in spirit and truth’ do not mean, as if often thought, earnestly, from the heart, in sincerity. The Samaritans had the five books of Moses and some knowledge of God; there was doubtless more than one among them who honestly and earnestly sought God in prayer. The Jews had the true full revelation of God in His word, as thus far given; there were among them godly men, who called upon God with their whole heart. And yet not ‘in spirit and truth,’ in the full meaning of the words. Jesus says, ‘The hour is coming, and now is;’ it is only in and through Him that the worship of God will be in spirit and truth.

Among Christians one still finds the three classes of worshippers. Some who in their ignorance hardly know what they ask: they pray earnestly, and yet receive but little. Others there are, who have more correct knowledge, who try to pray with all their mind and heart, and often pray most earnestly, and yet do not attain to the full blessedness of worship in spirit and truth. It is into this third class we must ask our Lord Jesus to take us; we must be taught of Him how to worship in spirit and truth. This alone is spiritual worship; this makes us worshippers such as the Father seeks. In prayer everything will depend on our understanding well and practising the worship in spirit and truth.

‘God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and truth.’ The first thought suggested here by the Master is that there must be harmony between God and His worshippers; such as God is, must His worship be. This is according to a principle which prevails throughout the universe: we look for correspondence between an object and the organ to which it reveals or yields itself. The eye has an inner fitness for the light, the ear for sound. The man who would truly worship God, would find and know and possess and enjoy God, must be in harmony with Him, must have the capacity for receiving Him. Because God is Spirit, we must worship in spirit. As God is, so His worshipper.

And what does this mean? The woman had asked our Lord whether Samaria or Jerusalem was the true place of worship. He answers that henceforth worship is no longer to be limited to a certain place: ‘Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father.’ As God is Spirit, not bound by space or time, but in His infinite perfection always and everywhere the same, so His worship would henceforth no longer be confined by place or form, but spiritual as God Himself is spiritual. A lesson of deep importance. How much our Christianity suffers from this, that it is confined to certain times and places. A man, who seeks to pray earnestly in the church or in the closet, spends the greater part of the week or the day in a spirit entirely at variance with that in which he prayed. His worship was the work of a fixed place or hour, not of his whole being. God is a Spirit: He is the Everlasting and Unchangeable One; what He is, He is always and in truth. Our worship must even so be in spirit and truth: His worship must be the spirit of our life; our life must be worship in spirit as God is Spirit.

‘God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth.’ The second thought that comes to us is that the worship in the spirit must come from God Himself. God is Spirit: He alone has Spirit to give. It was for this He sent His Son, to fit us for such spiritual worship, by giving us the Holy Spirit. It is of His own work that Jesus speaks when He says twice, ‘The hour

cometh,' and then adds, 'and is now.' He came to baptize with the Holy Spirit; the Spirit could not stream forth till He was glorified (John i. 33, vii. 37, 38, xvi. 7). It was when He had made an end of sin, and entering into the Holiest of all with His blood, had there on our behalf received the Holy Spirit (Acts ii. 33), that He could send Him down to us as the Spirit of the Father. It was when Christ had redeemed us, and we in Him had received the position of children, that the Father sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts to cry, 'Abba, Father.' The worship in spirit is the worship of the Father in the Spirit of Christ , the Spirit of Sonship.

This is the reason why Jesus here uses the name of Father. We never find one of the Old Testament saints personally appropriate the name of child or call God his Father. The worship of the Father is only possible to those to whom the Spirit of the Son has been given. The worship in spirit is only possible to those to whom the Son has revealed the Father, and who have received the spirit of Sonship. It is only Christ who opens the way and teaches the worship in spirit.

And in truth. That does not only mean, in sincerity. Nor does it only signify, in accordance with the truth of God's Word. The expression is one of deep and Divine meaning. Jesus is 'the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.' 'The law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.' Jesus says, 'I am the truth and the life.' In the Old Testament all was shadow and promise; Jesus brought and gives the reality, the substance, of things hoped for. In Him the blessings and powers of the eternal life are our actual possession and experience. Jesus is full of grace and truth; the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth; through Him the grace that is in Jesus is ours in deed and truth, a positive communication out of the Divine life. And so worship in spirit is worship in truth; actual living fellowship with God, a real correspondence and harmony between the Father, who is a Spirit, and the child praying in the spirit.

What Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, she could not at once understand. Pentecost was needed to reveal its full meaning. We are hardly prepared at our first entrance into the school of prayer to grasp such teaching. We shall understand it better later on. Let us only begin and take the lesson as He gives it. We are carnal and cannot bring God the worship He seeks. But Jesus came to give the Spirit: He has given Him to us. Let the disposition in which we set ourselves to pray be what Christ's words have taught us. Let there be the deep confession of our inability to bring God the worship that is pleasing to Him; the childlike teachableness that waits on Him to instruct us; the simple faith that yields itself to the breathing of the Spirit. Above all, let us hold fast the blessed truth—we shall find that the Lord has more to say to us about it—that the knowledge of the Fatherhood of God, the revelation of His infinite Fatherliness in our hearts, the faith in the infinite love that gives us His Son and His Spirit to make us children, is indeed the secret of prayer in spirit and truth. This is the new and living way Christ opened up for us. To have Christ the Son, and the Spirit of the Son, dwelling within us, and revealing the Father, this makes us true, spiritual worshippers.

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

Blessed Lord! I adore the love with which Thou didst teach a woman, who had refused Thee a cup of water, what the worship of God must be. I rejoice in the assurance that Thou wilt no less now instruct Thy disciple, who comes to Thee with a heart that longs to pray in spirit and in truth. O my Holy Master! do teach me this blessed secret.

Teach me that the worship in spirit and truth is not of man, but only comes from Thee; that it is not only a thing of times and seasons, but the outflowing of a life in Thee. Teach me to draw near to God in prayer under the deep impression of my ignorance and my having nothing in myself to offer Him, and at the same time of the provision Thou, my Saviour, makest for the Spirit's breathing in my childlike stammerings. I do bless Thee that in Thee I am a child, and have a child's liberty of access; that in Thee I have the spirit of Sonship and of worship in truth. Teach me, above all, Blessed Son of the Father, how it is the revelation of the Father that gives confidence in prayer; and let the infinite Fatherliness of God's Heart be my joy and strength for a life of prayer and of worship. Amen.

THIRD LESSON.

‘Pray to thy Father, which is in secret;’
Or, Alone with God.

‘But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee’—Matt. vi. 6.

AFTER Jesus had called His first disciples, He gave them their first public teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. He there expounded to them the kingdom of God, its laws and its life. In that kingdom God is not only King, but Father, He not only gives all, but is Himself all. In the knowledge and fellowship of Him alone is its blessedness. Hence it came as a matter of course that the revelation of prayer and the prayer-life was a part of His teaching concerning the New Kingdom He came to set up. Moses gave neither command nor regulation with regard to prayer: even the prophets say little directly of the duty of prayer; it is Christ who teaches to pray.

And the first thing the Lord teaches His disciples is that they must have a secret place for prayer; every one must have some solitary spot where he can be alone with his God. Every teacher must have a schoolroom. We have learnt to know and accept Jesus as our only teacher in the school of prayer. He has already taught us at Samaria that worship is no longer confined to times and places; that worship, spiritual true worship, is a thing of the spirit and the life; the whole man must in his whole life be worship in spirit and truth. And yet He wants each one to choose for himself the fixed spot where He can daily meet him. That inner chamber, that solitary place, is Jesus’ schoolroom. That spot may be anywhere; that spot may change from day to day if we have to change our abode; but that secret place there must be, with the quiet time in which the pupil places himself in the Master’s presence, to be by Him prepared to worship the Father. There alone, but there most surely, Jesus comes to us to teach us to pray.

A teacher is always anxious that his schoolroom should be bright and attractive, filled with the light and air of heaven, a place where pupils long to come, and love to stay. In His first words on prayer in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus seeks to set the inner chamber before us in its most attractive light. If we listen carefully, we soon notice what the chief thing is He has to tell us of our tarrying there. Three times He uses the name of Father: ‘Pray to thy Father;’ ‘Thy Father shall recompense thee;’ ‘Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of.’ The first thing in closet-prayer is: I must meet my Father. The light that shines in the closet must be: the light of the Father’s countenance. The fresh air from heaven with which Jesus would have it filled, the atmosphere in which I am to breathe and pray, is: God’s Father-love, God’s infinite Fatherliness. Thus each thought or petition we breathe out will be simple, hearty, childlike trust in the Father. This is how the Master teaches us to pray: He brings us into the Father’s living presence. What we pray there must avail. Let us listen carefully to hear what the Lord has to say to us.

First, ‘Pray to thy Father which is in secret.’ God is a God who hides Himself to the carnal eye. As long as in our worship of God we are chiefly occupied with our own thoughts and exercises, we shall not meet Him who is a Spirit, the unseen One. But to the man who withdraws himself from all that is of the world and man, and prepares to wait upon God alone, the Father will reveal Himself. As he forsakes and gives up and shuts out the world, and the life of the world, and surrenders himself to be led of Christ into the secret of God’s presence, the light of the Father’s love will rise upon him. The secrecy of the inner chamber and the closed door, the entire separation from all around us, is an image of, and so a help to that inner spiritual sanctuary, the secret of God’s tabernacle, within the veil, where our spirit truly comes into contact with the Invisible One. And so we are taught, at the very outset of our search after the secret of effectual prayer, to remember that it is in the inner chamber, where we are alone with the Father, that we shall learn to pray aright. The Father is in secret: in these words Jesus teaches us where He is waiting us, where He is always to be found. Christians often complain that private prayer is not what it should be. They feel weak and sinful, the heart is cold and dark; it is as if they have so little to pray, and in that little no faith or joy. They are discouraged and kept from prayer by the thought that they cannot come to the Father as they ought or as they wish. Child of God! listen to your Teacher. He tells you that when you go to private prayer your first thought must be: The Father is in secret, the Father waits me there. Just because your heart is cold and prayerless, get you into the presence of the loving Father. As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth you. Do not be thinking of how little you have to bring God, but of how much He wants to give you. Just place yourself before, and look up into, His face; think of His love, His wonderful, tender, pitying love. Just tell Him how sinful and cold and dark all is: it is the Father’s loving heart will give light and warmth to yours. O do what Jesus says: Just shut the door, and pray to thy Father which is in secret. Is it not wonderful? to be able to go alone with God, the infinite God. And then to look up and say: My Father!

‘And thy Father, which seeth in secret, will recompense thee.’ Here Jesus assures us that secret prayer cannot be fruitless: its blessing will show itself in our life. We have but in secret, alone with God, to entrust our life before men to Him; He will reward us openly; He will see to it that the answer to prayer be made manifest in His blessing upon us. Our Lord would thus teach us that as infinite Fatherliness and Faithfulness is that with which God meets us in secret, so on our part there should be the childlike simplicity of faith, the confidence that our prayer does bring down a blessing. ‘He that cometh to God must believe that He is a rewarder of them that seek Him.’ Not on the strong or the fervent feeling with which I pray does the blessing of the closet depend, but upon the love and the power of the Father to whom I there entrust my needs. And therefore the Master has but one desire: Remember your Father is, and sees and hears in secret; go there and stay there, and go again from there in the confidence: He will recompense. Trust Him for it; depend upon Him: prayer to the Father cannot be vain; He will reward you openly.

Still further to confirm this faith in the Father-love of God, Christ speaks a third word: ‘Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him.’ At first sight it might appear as if this thought made prayer less needful: God knows far better than we what we need. But as we get a deeper insight into what prayer really is, this truth will help much to strengthen our faith. It will teach us that we do not need, as the heathen, with the multitude and urgency of our words, to compel an unwilling God to listen to us. It will lead to a holy thoughtfulness and silence in prayer as it suggests the question: Does my Father really know that I need this? It will, when once we have been led by the Spirit to the certainty that our request is indeed something that, according to the Word, we do need for God’s glory, give us wonderful confidence to say, My Father knows I need it and must have it. And if there be any delay in the answer, it will teach us in quiet perseverance to hold on: FATHER! THOU KNOWEST I need it. O the blessed liberty and simplicity of a child that Christ our Teacher would fain cultivate in us, as we draw near to God: let us look up to the Father until His Spirit works it in us. Let us sometimes in our prayers, when we are in danger of being so occupied with our fervent, urgent petitions, as to forget that the Father knows and hears, let us hold still and just quietly say: My Father sees, my Father hears, my Father knows; it will help our faith to take the answer, and to say: We know that we have the petitions we have asked of Him.

And now, all ye who have anew entered the school of Christ to be taught to pray, take these lessons, practise them, and trust Him to perfect you in them. Dwell much in the inner chamber, with the door shut—shut in from men, shut up with God; it is there the Father waits you, it is there Jesus will teach you to pray. To be alone in secret with THE FATHER: this be your highest joy. To be assured that THE FATHER will openly reward the secret prayer, so that it cannot remain unblessed: this be your strength day by day. And to know that THE FATHER knows that you need what you ask; this be your liberty to bring every need, in the assurance that your God will supply it according to His riches in Glory in Christ Jesus.

‘LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

Blessed Saviour! with my whole heart I do bless Thee for the appointment of the inner chamber, as the school where Thou meetest each of Thy pupils alone, and revealest to him the Father. O my Lord! strengthen my faith so in the Father’s tender love and kindness, that as often as I feel sinful or troubled, the first instinctive thought may be to go where I know the Father waits me, and where prayer never can go unblessed. Let the thought that He knows my need before I ask, bring me, in great restfulness of faith, to trust that He will give what His child requires. O let the place of secret prayer become to me the most beloved spot of earth.

And, Lord! hear me as I pray that Thou wouldest everywhere bless the closets of Thy believing people. Let Thy wonderful revelation of a Father’s tenderness free all young Christians from every thought of secret prayer as a duty or a burden, and lead them to regard it as the highest privilege of their life, a joy and a blessing. Bring back all who are discouraged, because they cannot find ought to bring Thee in prayer. O give them to understand that they have only to come with their emptiness to Him who has all to give, and delights to do it. Not, what they have to bring the Father, but what the Father waits to give them, be their one thought.

And bless especially the inner chamber of all Thy servants who are working for Thee, as the place where God’s truth and God’s grace is revealed to them, where they are daily anointed with fresh oil, where their strength is renewed, and the blessings are received in faith, with which they are to bless their fellow-men. Lord, draw us all in the closet nearer to Thyself and the Father. Amen.

FOURTH LESSON.

‘After this manner pray;’
Or, The Model Prayer.

‘After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven.’—
Matt. vi. 9.

EVERY teacher knows the power of example. He not only tells the child what to do and how to do it, but shows him how it really can be done. In condescension to our weakness, our heavenly Teacher has given us the very words we are to take with us as we draw near to our Father. We have in them a form of prayer in which there breathe the freshness and fulness of the Eternal Life. So simple that the child can lisp it, so divinely rich that it comprehends all that God can give. A form of prayer that becomes the model and inspiration for all other prayer, and yet always draws us back to itself as the deepest utterance of our souls before our God.

‘Our Father which art in heaven!’ To appreciate this word of adoration aright, I must remember that none of the saints had in Scripture ever ventured to address God as their Father. The invocation places us at once in the centre of the wonderful revelation the Son came to make of His Father as our Father too. It comprehends the mystery of redemption—Christ delivering us from the curse that we might become the children of God. The mystery of regeneration—the Spirit in the new birth giving us the new life. And the mystery of faith—ere yet the redemption is accomplished or understood, the word is given on the lips of the disciples to prepare them for the blessed experience still to come. The words are the key to the whole prayer, to all prayer. It takes time, it takes life to study them; it will take eternity to understand them fully. The knowledge of God’s Father-love is the first and simplest, but also the last and highest lesson in the school of prayer. It is in the personal relation to the living God, and the personal conscious fellowship of love with Himself, that prayer begins. It is in the knowledge of God’s Fatherliness, revealed by the Holy Spirit, that the power of prayer will be found to root and grow. In the infinite tenderness and pity and patience of the infinite Father, in His loving readiness to hear and to help, the life of prayer has its joy. O let us take time, until the Spirit has made these words to us spirit and truth, filling heart and life: ‘Our Father which art in heaven.’ Then we are indeed within the veil, in the secret place of power where prayer always prevails.

‘Hallowed be Thy name.’ There is something here that strikes us at once. While we ordinarily first bring our own needs to God in prayer, and then think of what belongs to God and His interests, the Master reverses the order. First, Thy name, Thy kingdom, Thy will; then, give us, forgive us, lead us, deliver us. The lesson is of more importance than we think. In true worship the Father must be first, must be all. The sooner I learn to forget myself in the desire that HE may be glorified, the richer will the blessing be that prayer will bring to myself. No one ever loses by what he sacrifices for the Father.

This must influence all our prayer. There are two sorts of prayer: personal and intercessory. The latter ordinarily occupies the lesser part of our time and energy. This may not be. Christ has opened the school of prayer specially to train intercessors for the great work of bringing down, by their faith and prayer, the blessings of His work and love on the world around. There can be no deep growth in prayer unless this be made our aim. The little child may ask of the father only what it needs for itself; and yet it soon learns to say, Give some for sister too. But the grown-up son, who only lives for the father’s interest and takes charge of the father’s business, asks more largely, and gets all that is asked. And Jesus would train us to the blessed life of consecration and service, in which our interests are all subordinate to the Name, and the Kingdom, and the Will of the Father. O let us live for this, and let, on each act of adoration, Our Father! there follow in the same breath Thy Name, Thy Kingdom, Thy Will;—for this we look up and long.

‘Hallowed be Thy name.’ What name? This new name of Father. The word Holy is the central word of the Old Testament; the name Father of the New. In this name of Love all the holiness and glory of God are now to be revealed. And how is the name to be hallowed? By God Himself: ‘I will hallow My great name which ye have profaned.’ Our prayer must be that in ourselves, in all God’s children, in presence of the world, God Himself would reveal the holiness, the Divine power, the hidden glory of the name of Father. The Spirit of the Father is the Holy Spirit: it is only when we yield ourselves to be led of Him, that the name will be hallowed in our prayers and our lives. Let us learn the prayer: ‘Our Father, hallowed be Thy name.’

‘Thy kingdom come.’ The Father is a King and has a kingdom. The son and heir of a king has no higher ambition than the glory of his father’s kingdom. In time of war or danger this becomes his passion; he can think of nothing else. The children of the Father are here in the enemy’s territory, where the kingdom, which is in heaven, is not yet fully manifested. What more natural than that, when

they learn to hallow the Father-name, they should long and cry with deep enthusiasm: ‘Thy kingdom come.’ The coming of the kingdom is the one great event on which the revelation of the Father’s glory, the blessedness of His children, the salvation of the world depends. On our prayers too the coming of the kingdom waits. Shall we not join in the deep longing cry of the redeemed: ‘Thy kingdom come’? Let us learn it in the school of Jesus.

‘Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.’ This petition is too frequently applied alone to the suffering of the will of God. In heaven God’s will is done, and the Master teaches the child to ask that the will may be done on earth just as in heaven: in the spirit of adoring submission and ready obedience. Because the will of God is the glory of heaven, the doing of it is the blessedness of heaven. As the will is done, the kingdom of heaven comes into the heart. And wherever faith has accepted the Father’s love, obedience accepts the Father’s will. The surrender to, and the prayer for a life of heaven-like obedience, is the spirit of childlike prayer.

‘Give us this day our daily bread.’ When first the child has yielded himself to the Father in the care for His Name, His Kingdom, and His Will, he has full liberty to ask for his daily bread. A master cares for the food of his servant, a general of his soldiers, a father of his child. And will not the Father in heaven care for the child who has in prayer given himself up to His interests? We may indeed in full confidence say: Father, I live for Thy honour and Thy work; I know Thou carest for me. Consecration to God and His will gives wonderful liberty in prayer for temporal things: the whole earthly life is given to the Father’s loving care.

‘And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.’ As bread is the first need of the body, so forgiveness for the soul. And the provision for the one is as sure as for the other. We are children but sinners too; our right of access to the Father’s presence we owe to the precious blood and the forgiveness it has won for us. Let us beware of the prayer for forgiveness becoming a formality: only what is really confessed is really forgiven. Let us in faith accept the forgiveness as promised: as a spiritual reality, an actual transaction between God and us, it is the entrance into all the Father’s love and all the privileges of children. Such forgiveness, as a living experience, is impossible without a forgiving spirit to others: as forgiven expresses the heavenward, so forgiving the earthward, relation of God’s child. In each prayer to the Father I must be able to say that I know of no one whom I do not heartily love.

‘And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’ Our daily bread, the pardon of our sins, and then our being kept from all sin and the power of the evil one, in these three petitions all our personal need is comprehended. The prayer for bread and pardon must be accompanied by the surrender to live in all things in holy obedience to the Father’s will, and the believing prayer in everything to be kept by the power of the indwelling Spirit from the power of the evil one.

Children of God! it is thus Jesus would have us to pray to the Father in heaven. O let His Name, and Kingdom, and Will, have the first place in our love; His providing, and pardoning, and keeping love will be our sure portion. So the prayer will lead us up to the true child-life: the Father all to the child, the Father all for the child. We shall understand how Father and child, the Thine and the Our, are all one, and how the heart that begins its prayer with the God-devoted THINK, will have the power in faith to speak out the OUR too. Such prayer will, indeed, be the fellowship and interchange of love, always bringing us back in trust and worship to Him who is not only the Beginning but the End: ‘FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOR EVER, AMEN.’ Son of the Father, teach us to pray, ‘OUR FATHER.’

‘LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

O Thou who art the only-begotten Son, teach us, we beseech Thee, to pray, ‘OUR FATHER.’ We thank Thee, Lord, for these Living Blessed Words which Thou has given us. We thank Thee for the millions who in them have learnt to know and worship the Father, and for what they have been to us. Lord! it is as if we needed days and weeks in Thy school with each separate petition; so deep and full are they. But we look to Thee to lead us deeper into their meaning: do it, we pray Thee, for Thy Name’s sake; Thy name is Son of the Father.

Lord! Thou didst once say: ‘No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal Him.’ And again: ‘I made known unto them Thy name, and will make it known, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them.’ Lord Jesus! reveal to us the Father. Let His name, His infinite Father-love, the love with which He loved Thee, according to Thy prayer, BE IN US. Then shall we say aright, ‘OUR FATHER!’ Then shall we apprehend Thy teaching, and the first spontaneous breathing of our heart will be: ‘Our Father, Thy Name, Thy Kingdom, Thy Will.’ And we shall bring our needs and our sins and our temptations to Him in the confidence that the love of such a Father care for all.

Blessed Lord! we are Thy scholars, we trust Thee; do teach us to pray, ‘OUR FATHER.’ Amen.

FIFTH LESSON.

‘Ask, and it shall be given you; ‘
Or, The Certainty of the Answer to Prayer.

‘Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened,’—Matt. vii. 7, 8.
‘Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss.’—Jas. iv. 3.

OUR Lord returns here in the Sermon on the Mount a second time to speak of prayer. The first time He had spoken of the Father who is to be found in secret, and rewards openly, and had given us the pattern prayer (Matt. vi. 5-15). Here He wants to teach us what in all Scripture is considered the chief thing in prayer: the assurance that prayer will be heard and answered. Observe how He uses words which mean almost the same thing, and each time repeats the promise so distinctly: ‘Ye shall receive, ye shall find, it shall be opened unto you;’ and then gives as ground for such assurance the law of the kingdom: ‘He that asketh, receiveth; he that seeketh, findeth; to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.’ We cannot but feel how in this sixfold repetition He wants to impress deep on our minds this one truth, that we may and must most confidently expect an answer to our prayer. Next to the revelation of the Father’s love, there is, in the whole course of the school of prayer, not a more important lesson than this: Every one that asketh, receiveth.

In the three words the Lord uses, ask, seek, knock, a difference in meaning has been sought. If such was indeed His purpose, then the first, ASK, refers to the gifts we pray for. But I may ask and receive the gift without the Giver. SEEK is the word Scripture uses of God Himself; Christ assures me that I can find Himself. But it is not enough to find God in time of need, without coming to abiding fellowship: KNOCK speaks of admission to dwell with Him and in Him. Asking and receiving the gift would thus lead to seeking and finding the Giver, and this again to the knocking and opening of the door of the Father’s home and love. One thing is sure: the Lord does want us to count most certainly on it that asking, seeking, knocking, cannot be in vain: receiving an answer, finding God, the opened heart and home of God, are the certain fruit of prayer.

That the Lord should have thought it needful in so many forms to repeat the truth, is a lesson of deep import. It proves that He knows our heart, how doubt and distrust toward God are natural to us, and how easily we are inclined to rest in prayer as a religious work without an answer. He knows too how, even when we believe that God is the Hearer of prayer, believing prayer that lays hold of the promise, is something spiritual, too high and difficult for the half-hearted disciple. He therefore at the very outset of His instruction to those who would learn to pray, seeks to lodge this truth deep into their hearts: prayer does avail much; ask and ye shall receive; every one that asketh, receiveth. This is the fixed eternal law of the kingdom: if you ask and receive not, it must be because there is something amiss or wanting in the prayer. Hold on; let the Word and the Spirit teach you to pray aright, but do not let go the confidence He seeks to waken: Every one that asketh, receiveth.

‘Ask, and it shall be given you.’ Christ has no mightier stimulus to persevering prayer in His school than this. As a child has to prove a sum to be correct, so the proof that we have prayed aright is, the answer. If we ask and receive not, it is because we have not learned to pray aright. Let every learner in the school of Christ therefore take the Master’s word in all simplicity: Every one that asketh, receiveth. He had good reasons for speaking so unconditionally. Let us beware of weakening the Word with our human wisdom. When He tells us heavenly things, let us believe Him: His Word will explain itself to him who believes it fully. If questions and difficulties arise, let us not seek to have them settled before we accept the Word. No; let us entrust them all to Him: it is His to solve them: our work is first and fully to accept and hold fast His promise. Let in our inner chamber, in the inner chamber of our heart too, the Word be inscribed in letters of light: Every one that asketh, receiveth.

According to this teaching of the Master, prayer consists of two parts, has two sides, a human and a Divine. The human is the asking, the Divine is the giving. Or, to look at both from the human side, there is the asking and the receiving—the two halves that make up a whole. It is as if He would tell us that we are not to rest without an answer, because it is the will of God, the rule in the Father’s family: every childlike believing petition is granted. If no answer comes, we are not to sit down in the sloth that calls itself resignation, and suppose that it is not God’s will to give an answer. No; there must be something in the prayer that is not as God would have it, childlike and believing; we must seek for grace to pray so that the answer may come. It is far easier to the flesh to submit without the answer than to yield itself to be searched and purified by the Spirit, until it has learnt to pray the prayer of faith.

It is one of the terrible marks of the diseased state of Christian life in these days, that there are so many who rest content without the distinct experience of answer to prayer. They pray daily, they ask many things, and trust that some of them will be heard, but know little of direct definite answer to prayer as the rule of daily life. And it is this the Father wills: He seeks daily intercourse with His children in listening to and granting their petitions. he wills that I should come to Him day by day with distinct requests; He wills day by day to do for me what I ask. It was in His answer to prayer that the saints of old learned to know God as the Living One, and were stirred to praise and love (Ps. xxxiv., lxvi. 19, cxvi. 1). Our Teacher waits to imprint this upon our minds: prayer and its answer, the child asking and the father giving, belong to each other.

There may be cases in which the answer is a refusal, because the request is not according to God's Word, as when Moses asked to enter Canaan. But still, there was an answer: God did not leave His servant in uncertainty as to His will. The gods of the heathen are dumb and cannot speak. Our Father lets His child know when He cannot give him what he asks, and he withdraws his petition, even as the Son did in Gethsemane. Both Moses the servant and Christ the Son knew that what they asked was not according to what the Lord had spoken: their prayer was the humble supplication whether it was not possible for the decision to be changed. God will teach those who are teachable and give Him time, by His Word and Spirit, whether their request be according to His will or not. Let us withdraw the request, if it be not according to God's mind, or persevere till the answer come. Prayer is appointed to obtain the answer. It is in prayer and its answer that the interchange of love between the Father and His child takes place.

How deep the estrangement of our heart from God must be, that we find it so difficult to grasp such promises. Even while we accept the words and believe their truth, the faith of the heart, that fully has them and rejoices in them, comes so slowly. It is because our spiritual life is still so weak, and the capacity for taking God's thoughts is so feeble. But let us look to Jesus to teach us as none but He can teach. If we take His words in simplicity, and trust Him by His Spirit to make them within us life and power, they will so enter into our inner being, that the spiritual Divine reality of the truth they contain will indeed take possession of us, and we shall not rest content until every petition we offer is borne heavenward on Jesus' own words: 'Ask, and it shall be given you.'

Beloved fellow-disciples in the school of Jesus! let us set ourselves to learn this lesson well. Let us take these words just as they were spoken. Let us not suffer human reason to weaken their force. Let us take them as Jesus gives them, and believe them. He will teach us in due time how to understand them fully: let us begin by implicitly believing them. Let us take time, as often as we pray, to listen to His voice: Every one that asketh, receiveth. Let us not make the feeble experiences of our unbelief the measure of what our faith may expect. Let us seek, not only just in our seasons of prayer, but at all times, to hold fast the joyful assurance: man's prayer on earth and God's answer in heaven are meant for each other. Let us trust Jesus to teach us so to pray that the answer can come. He will do it, if we hold fast the word He gives today: 'Ask, and ye shall receive.'

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

O Lord Jesus! teach me to understand and believe what Thou hast now promised me. It is not hid from Thee, O my Lord, with what reasonings my heart seeks to satisfy itself, when no answer comes. There is the thought that my prayer is not in harmony with the Father's secret counsel; that there is perhaps something better Thou wouldest give me; or that prayer as fellowship with God is blessing enough without an answer. And yet, my blessed Lord, I find in Thy teaching on prayer that Thou didst not speak of these things, but didst say so plainly, that prayer may and must expect an answer. Thou dost assure us that this is the fellowship of a child with the Father: the child asks and the Father gives.

Blessed Lord! Thy words are faithful and true. It must be, because I pray amiss, that my experience of answered prayer is not clearer. It must be, because I live too little in the Spirit, that my prayer is too little in the Spirit, and that the power for the prayer of faith is wanting.

Lord! teach me to pray. Lord Jesus! I trust Thee for it; teach me to pray in faith. Lord! teach me this lesson of today: Every one that asketh receiveth. Amen.

SIXTH LESSON.

'How much more?'
Or, The Infinite Fatherliness of God.

'Or what man is there of you, who, if his son ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone; or if he shall ask for a fish, will give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?'—Matt. vii. 9-11

IN these words our Lord proceeds further to confirm what He had said of the certainty of an answer to prayer. To remove all doubt, and show us on what sure ground His promise rests, He appeals to what every one has seen and experienced here on earth. We are all children, and know what we expected of our fathers. We are fathers, or continually see them; and everywhere we look upon it as the most natural thing there can be, for a father to hear his child. And the Lord asks us to look up from earthly parents, of whom the best are but evil, and to calculate HOW MUCH MORE the heavenly Father will give good gifts to them that ask Him. Jesus would lead us up to see, that as much greater as God is than sinful man, so much greater our assurance ought to be that He will more surely than any earthly father grant our childlike petitions. As much greater as God is than man, so much surer is it that prayer will be heard with the Father in heaven than with a father on earth.

As simple and intelligible as this parable is, so deep and spiritual is the teaching it contains. The Lord would remind us that the prayer of a child owes its influence entirely to the relation in which he stands to the parent. The prayer can exert that influence only when the child is really living in that relationship, in the home, in the love, in the service of the Father. The power of the promise, 'Ask, and it shall be given you,' lies in the loving relationship between us as children and the Father in heaven; when we live and walk in that relationship, the prayer of faith and its answer will be the natural result. And so the lesson we have today in the school of prayer is this: Live as a child of God, then you will be able to pray as a child, and as a child you will most assuredly be heard.

And what is the true child-life? The answer can be found in any home. The child that by preference forsakes the father's house, that finds no pleasure in the presence and love and obedience of the father, and still thinks to ask and obtain what he will, will surely be disappointed. On the contrary, he to whom the intercourse and will and honour and love of the father are the joy of his life, will find that it is the father's joy to grant his requests. Scripture says, 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the children of God:' the childlike privilege of asking all is inseparable from the childlike life under the leading of the Spirit. He that gives himself to be led by the Spirit in his life, will be led by Him in his prayers too. And he will find that Fatherlike giving is the Divine response to childlike living.

To see what this childlike living is, in which childlike asking and believing have their ground, we have only to notice what our Lord teaches in the Sermon on the Mount of the Father and His children. In it the prayer-promises are imbedded in the life-precepts; the two are inseparable. They form one whole; and He alone can count on the fulfilment of the promise, who accepts too all that the Lord has connected with it. It is as if in speaking the word, 'Ask, and ye shall receive,' He says: I give these promises to those whom in the beatitudes I have pictured in their childlike poverty and purity, and of whom I have said, 'They shall be called the children of God' (Matt. v. 3-9): to children, who 'let your light shine before men, so that they may glorify your Father in heaven:' to those who walk in love, 'that ye may be children of your Father which is in heaven,' and who seek to be perfect 'even as your Father in heaven is perfect' (v. 45): to those whose fasting and praying and almsgiving (vi. 1-18) is not before men, but 'before your Father which seeth in secret;' who forgive 'even as your Father forgiveth you' (vi. 15); who trust the heavenly Father in all earthly need, seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (vi. 26-32); who not only say, Lord, Lord, but do the will of my Father which is in heaven (vii. 21). Such are the children of the Father, and such is the life in the Father's love and service; in such a child-life answered prayers are certain and abundant.

But will not such teaching discourage the feeble one? If we are first to answer to this portrait of a child, must not many give up all hope of answers to prayer? The difficulty is removed if we think again of the blessed name of father and child. A child is weak; there is a great difference among children in age and gift. The Lord does not demand of us a perfect fulfilment of the law; no, but only the childlike and whole-hearted surrender to live as a child with Him in obedience and truth. Nothing more. But also, nothing less. The Father must have the whole heart. When this is given, and He sees the child with honest purpose and steady will seeking in everything to be and live as a child, then our prayer will count with Him as the prayer of a child. Let any one simply and honestly

begin to study the Sermon on the Mount and take it as his guide in life, and he will find, notwithstanding weakness and failure, an ever-growing liberty to claim the fulfilment of its promises in regard to prayer. In the names of father and child he has the pledge that his petitions will be granted.

This is the one chief thought on which Jesus dwells here, and which He would have all His scholars take in. He would have us see that the secret of effectual prayer is: to have the heart filled with the Father-love of God. It is not enough for us to know that God is a Father: He would have us take time to come under the full impression of what that name implies. We must take the best earthly father we know; we must think of the tenderness and love with which he regards the request of his child, the love and joy with which he grants every reasonable desire; we must then, as we think in adoring worship of the infinite Love and Fatherliness of God, consider with how much more tenderness and joy He sees us come to Him, and gives us what we ask aright. And then, when we see how much this Divine arithmetic is beyond our comprehension, and feel how impossible it is for us to apprehend God's readiness to hear us, then He would have us come and open our heart for the Holy Spirit to shed abroad God's Father-love there. Let us do this not only when we want to pray, but let us yield heart and life to dwell in that love. The child who only wants to know the love of the father when he has something to ask, will be disappointed. But he who lets God be Father always and in everything, who would fain live his whole life in the Father's presence and love, who allows God in all the greatness of His love to be a Father to him, oh! he will experience most gloriously that a life in God's infinite Fatherliness and continual answers to prayer are inseparable.

Beloved fellow-disciple! we begin to see what the reason is that we know so little of daily answers to prayer, and what the chief lesson is which the Lord has for us in His school. It is all in the name of Father. We thought of new and deeper insight into some of the mysteries of the prayer-world as what we should get in Christ's school; He tells us the first is the highest lesson; we must learn to say well, 'Abba, Father!' 'Our Father which art in heaven.' He that can say this, has the key to all prayer. In all the compassion with which a father listens to his weak or sickly child, in all the joy with which he hears his stammering child, in all the gentle patience with which he bears with a thoughtless child, we must, as in so many mirrors, study the heart of our Father, until every prayer be borne upward on the faith of this Divine word: 'How much more shall your heavenly Father give good gifts to them that ask Him.'

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

Blessed Lord! Thou knowest that this, though it be one of the first and simplest and most glorious lessons in Thy school, is to our hearts one of the hardest to learn: we know so little of the love of the Father. Lord! teach us so to live with the Father that His love may be to us nearer, clearer, dearer, than the love of any earthly father. And let the assurance of His hearing our prayer be as much greater than the confidence in an earthly parent, as the heavens are higher than earth, as God is infinitely greater than man. Lord! show us that it is only our unchildlike distance from the Father that hinders the answer to prayer, and lead us on to the true life of God's children. Lord Jesus! it is fatherlike love that wakens childlike trust. O reveal to us the Father, and His tender, pitying love, that we may become childlike, and experience how in the child-life lies the power of prayer.

Blessed Son of God! the Father loveth Thee and hath given Thee all things. And Thou lovest the Father, and hast done all things He commanded Thee, and therefore hast the power to ask all things. Lord! give us Thine own Spirit, the Spirit of the Son. Make us childlike, as Thou wert on earth. And let every prayer be breathed in the faith that as the heaven is higher than the earth, so God's Father-love, and His readiness to give us what we ask, surpasses all we can think or conceive. Amen.

NOTE.1

'Your Father which is in heaven.' Alas! we speak of it only as the utterance of a reverential homage. We think of it as a figure borrowed from an earthly life, and only in some faint and shallow meaning to be used of God. We are afraid to take God as our own tender and pitiful father. He is a schoolmaster, or almost farther off than that, and knowing less about us—an inspector, who knows nothing of us except through our lessons. His eyes are not on the scholar, but on the book, and all alike must come up to the standard.

Now open the ears of the heart, timid child of God; let it go sinking right down into the inner most depths of the soul. Here is the starting-point of holiness, in the love and patience and pity of our heavenly Father. We have not to learn to be holy as a hard lesson at school, that we may make God think well of us; we are to learn it at home with the Father to help us. God loves you not because you are clevare good, but because He is your Father. The Cross of Christ does not make God love us; it is the outcome and measure of His love to us. He loves all His children, the clumsiest, the dullest, the worst of His children. His love lies at the back of everything, and we must get upon that as the solid foundation of our religious life, not growing up into that, but growing up out if it.

We must begin there or our beginning will come to nothing. Do take hold of this mightily. We must go out of ourselves for any hope, or any strength, or any confidence. And what hope, what strength, what confidence may be ours now that we begin here, your Father which is in heaven!

We need to get in at the tenderness and helpfulness which lie in these words, and to rest upon it—your Father. Speak them over to yourself until something of the wonderful truth is felt by us. It means that I am bound to God by the closest and tenderest relationship; that I have a right to His love and His power and His blessing, such as nothing else could give me. O the boldness with which we can draw near! O the great things we have a right to ask for! Your Father. It means that all His infinite love and patience and wisdom bend over me to help me. In this relationship lies not only the possibility of holiness; there is infinitely more than that.

Here we are to begin, in the patient love of our Father. Think how He knows us apart and by ourselves, in all our peculiarities, and in all our weaknesses and difficulties. The master judges by the result, but our Father judges by the effort. Failure does not always mean fault. He knows how much things cost, and weighs them where others only measure. YOUR FATHER. Think how great store His love sets by the poor beginnings of the little ones, clumsy and unmeaning as they may be to others. All this lies in this blessed relationship and infinitely more. Do not fear to take it all as your own.

1From Thoughts on Holiness, by Mark Guy Pearse. What is so beautifully said of the knowledge of God's Fatherliness as the starting-point of holiness is no less true of prayer.

SEVENTH LESSON.

‘How much more the Holy Spirit;
Or, The All-Comprehensive Gift.

‘If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?’—Luke xi. 13.

IN the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord had already given utterance to His wonderful HOW MUCH MORE? Here in Luke, where He repeats the question, there is a difference. Instead of speaking, as then of giving good gifts, He says, ‘How much more shall the heavenly Father give THE HOLY SPIRIT?’ He thus teaches us that the chief and the best of these gifts is the Holy Spirit, or rather, that in this gift all others are comprised The Holy Spirit is the first of the Father’s gifts, and the one He delights most to bestow. The Holy Spirit is therefore the gift we ought first and chiefly to seek.

The unspeakable worth of this gift we can easily understand. Jesus spoke of the Spirit as ‘the promise of the Father;’ the one promise in which God’s Fatherhood revealed itself. The best gift a good and wise father can bestow on a child on earth is his own spirit. This is the great object of a father in education—to reproduce in his child his own disposition and character. If the child is to know and understand his father; if, as he grows up, he is to enter into all his will and plans; if he is to have his highest joy in the father, and the father in him,—he must be of one mind and spirit with him. And so it is impossible to conceive of God bestowing any higher gift on His child than this, His own Spirit. God is what He is through His Spirit; the Spirit is the very life of God. Just think what it means—God giving His own Spirit to His child on earth.

Or was not this the glory of Jesus as a Son upon earth, that the Spirit of the Father was in Him? At His baptism in Jordan the two things were united,—the voice, proclaiming Him the Beloved Son, and the Spirit, descending upon Him. And so the apostle says of us, ‘Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.’ A king seeks in the whole education of his son to call forth in him a kingly spirit. Our Father in heaven desires to educate us as His children for the holy, heavenly life in which He dwells, and for this gives us, from the depths of His heart, His own Spirit. It was this which was the whole aim of Jesus when, after having made atonement with His own blood, He entered for us into God’s presence, that He might obtain for us, and send down to dwell in us, the Holy Spirit. As the Spirit of the Father, and of the Son, the whole life and love of the Father and the Son are in Him; and, coming down into us, He lifts us up into their fellowship. As Spirit of the Father, He sheds abroad the Father’s love, with which He loved the Son, in our hearts, and teaches us to live in it. As Spirit of the Son, He breathes in us the childlike liberty, and devotion, and obedience in which the Son lived upon earth. The Father can bestow no higher or more wonderful gift than this: His own Holy Spirit, the Spirit of sonship.

This truth naturally suggests the thought that this first and chief gift of God must be the first and chief object of all prayer. For every need of the spiritual life this is the one thing needful, the Holy Spirit. All the fulness is in Jesus; the fulness of grace and truth, out of which we receive grace for grace. The Holy Spirit is the appointed conveyancer, whose special work it is to make Jesus and all there is in Him for us ours in personal appropriation, in blessed experience. He is the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus; as wonderful as the life is, so wonderful is the provision by which such an agent is provided to communicate it to us. If we but yield ourselves entirely to the disposal of the Spirit, and let Him have His way with us, He will manifest the life of Christ within us. He will do this with a Divine power, maintaining the life of Christ in us in uninterrupted continuity. Surely, if there is one prayer that should draw us to the Father’s throne and keep us there, it is this: for the Holy Spirit, whom we as children have received, to stream into us and out from us in greater fulness.

In the variety of the gifts which the Spirit has to dispense, He meets the believer’s every need. Just think of the names He bears. The Spirit of grace, to reveal and impart all of grace there is in Jesus. The Spirit of faith, teaching us to begin and go on and increase in ever believing. The Spirit of adoption and assurance, who witnesses that we are God’s children, and inspires the confiding and confident Abba, Father! The Spirit of truth, to lead into all truth, to make each word of God ours in deed and in truth. The Spirit of prayer, through whom we speak with the Father; prayer that must be heard. The Spirit of judgment and burning, to search the heart, and convince of sin. The Spirit of holiness, manifesting and communicating the Father’s holy presence within us. The Spirit of power, through whom we are strong to testify boldly and work effectually in the Father’s service. The Spirit of glory, the pledge of our inheritance, the preparation and the foretaste of the glory to come. Surely the child of God needs but one thing to be able really to live as a child: it is, to be filled with this Spirit.

And now, the lesson Jesus teaches us today in His school is this: That the Father is just longing to give Him to us if we will but ask in the childlike dependence on what He says: ‘If ye know to give good gifts unto your children, HOW MUCH MORE shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.’ In the words of God’s promise, ‘I will pour out my Spirit abundantly;’ and of His command, ‘Be ye filled with the Spirit’ we have the measure of what God is ready to give, and what we may obtain. As God’s children, we have already received the Spirit. But we still need to ask and pray for His special gifts and operations as we require them. And not only this, but for Himself to take complete and entire possession; for His unceasing momentary guidance. Just as the branch, already filled with the sap of the vine, is ever crying for the continued and increasing flow of that sap, that it may bring its fruit to perfection, so the believer, rejoicing in the possession of the Spirit, ever thirsts and cries for more. And what the great Teacher would have us learn is, that nothing less than God’s promise and God’s command may be the measure of our expectation and our prayer; we must be filled abundantly. He would have us ask this in the assurance that the wonderful HOW MUCH MORE of God’s Father-love is the pledge that, when we ask, we do most certainly receive.

Let us now believe this. As we pray to be filled with the Spirit, let us not seek for the answer in our feelings. All spiritual blessings must be received, that is, accepted or taken in faith.[1] Let me believe, the Father gives the Holy Spirit to His praying child. Even now, while I pray, I must say in faith: I have what I ask, the fulness of the Spirit is mine. Let us continue stedfast in this faith. On the strength of God’s Word we know that we have what we ask. Let us, with thanksgiving that we have been heard, with thanksgiving for what we have received and taken and now hold as ours, continue stedfast in believing prayer that the blessing, which has already been given us, and which we hold in faith, may break through and fill our whole being. It is in such believing thanksgiving and prayer, that our soul opens up for the Spirit to take entire and undisturbed possession. It is such prayer that not only asks and hopes, but takes and holds, that inherits the full blessing. In all our prayer let us remember the lesson the Saviour would teach us this day, that, if there is one thing on earth we can be sure of, it is this, that the Father desires to have us filled with His Spirit, that He delights to give us His Spirit.

And when once we have learned thus to believe for ourselves, and each day to take out of the treasure we hold in heaven, what liberty and power to pray for the outpouring of the Spirit on the Church of God, on all flesh, on individuals, or on special efforts! He that has once learned to know the Father in prayer for himself, learns to pray most confidently for others too. The Father gives the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, not least, but most, when they ask for others.

‘LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

Father in heaven! Thou didst send Thy Son to reveal Thyself to us, Thy Father-love, and all that that love has for us. And He has taught us, that the gift above all gifts which Thou wouldst bestow in answer to prayer is, the Holy Spirit.

O my Father! I come to Thee with this prayer; there is nothing I would—may I not say, I do—desire so much as to be filled with the Spirit, the Holy Spirit. The blessings He brings are so unspeakable, and just what I need. He sheds abroad Thy love in the heart, and fills it with Thy self. I long for this. He breathes the mind and life of Christ in me, so that I live as He did, in and for the Father’s love. I long for this. He endues with power from on high for all my walk and work. I long for this. O Father! I beseech Thee, give me this day the fulness of Thy Spirit.

Father! I ask this, resting on the words of my Lord: ‘HOW MUCH MORE THE HOLY SPIRIT.’ I do believe that Thou hearest my prayer; I receive now what I ask; Father! I claim and I take it: the fulness of Thy Spirit is mine. I receive the gift this day again as a faith gift; in faith I reckon my Father works through the Spirit all He has promised. The Father delights to breathe His Spirit into His waiting child as He tarries in fellowship with Himself. Amen.

1 The Greek word for receiving and taking is the same. When Jesus said, ‘Everyone that asketh receiveth,’ He used the same verb as at the Supper, ‘Take, eat,’ or on the resurrection morning, ‘Receive,’ accept, take, ‘the Holy Spirit.’ Receiving not only implies God’s bestowment, but our acceptance.

EIGHTH LESSON.

‘Because of his importunity;’
Or, The Boldness of God’s Friends.

‘And He said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine is come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’ and he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.’—Luke xi. 5-8.

THE first teaching to His disciples was given by our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount. It was near a year later that the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray. In answer He gave them a second time the Lord’s Prayer, so teaching them what to pray. He then speaks of how they ought to pray, and repeats what he formerly said of God’s Fatherliness and the certainty of an answer. But in between He adds the beautiful parable of the friend at midnight, to teach them the two fold lesson, that God does not only want us to pray for ourselves, but for the perishing around us, and that in such intercession great boldness of entreaty is often needful, and always lawful, yea, pleasing to God.

The parable is a perfect storehouse of instruction in regard to true intercession. There is, first, the love which seeks to help the needy around us: ‘my friend is come to me.’ Then the need which urges to the cry ‘I have nothing to set before him.’ Then follows the confidence that help is to be had: ‘which of you shall have a friend, and say, Friend, lend me three loaves.’ Then comes the unexpected refusal: ‘I cannot rise and give thee.’ Then again the perseverance that takes no refusal: ‘because of his importunity.’ And lastly, the reward of such prayer: ‘he will give him as many as he needeth.’ A wonderful setting forth of the way of prayer and faith in which the blessing of God has so often been sought and found.

Let us confine ourselves to the chief thought: prayer as an appeal to the friendship of God; and we shall find that two lessons are specially suggested. The one, that if we are God’s friends, and come as such to Him, we must prove ourselves the friends of the needy; God’s friendship to us and ours to others go hand in hand. The other, that when we come thus we may use the utmost liberty in claiming an answer.

There is a twofold use of prayer: the one, to obtain strength and blessing for our own life; the other, the higher, the true glory of prayer, for which Christ has taken us into His fellowship and teaching, is intercession, where prayer is the royal power a child of God exercises in heaven on behalf of others and even of the kingdom. We see it in Scripture, how it was in intercession for others that Abraham and Moses, Samuel and Elijah, with all the holy men of old, proved that they had power with God and prevailed. It is when we give ourselves to be a blessing that we can specially count on the blessing of God. It is when we draw near to God as the friend of the poor and the perishing that we may count on His friendliness; the righteous man who is the friend of the poor is very specially the friend of God. This gives wonderful liberty in prayer. Lord! I have a needy friend whom I must help. As a friend I have undertaken to help him. In Thee I have a Friend, whose kindness and riches I know to be infinite: I am sure Thou wilt give me what I ask. If I, being evil, am ready to do for my friend what I can, how much more wilt Thou, O my heavenly Friend, now do for Thy friend what he asks?

The question might suggest itself, whether the Fatherhood of God does not give such confidence in prayer, that the thought of His Friendship can hardly teach us anything more: a father is more than a friend. And yet, if we consider it, this pleading the friendship of God opens new wonders to us. That a child obtains what he asks of his father looks so perfectly natural, we almost count it the father’s duty to give. But with a friend it is as if the kindness is more free, dependent, not on nature, but on sympathy and character. And then the relation of a child is more that of perfect dependence; two friends are more nearly on a level. And so our Lord, in seeking to unfold to us the spiritual mystery of prayer, would fain have us approach God in this relation too, as those whom He has acknowledged as His friends, whose mind and life are in sympathy with His.

But then we must be living as His friends. I am still a child even when a wanderer; but friendship depends upon the conduct. ‘Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.’ ‘Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made

perfect; and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, and he was called the friend of God.' It is the Spirit, 'the same Spirit,' that leads us that also bears witness to our acceptance with God; 'likewise, also,' the same Spirit helpeth us in prayer. It is a life as the friend of God that gives the wonderful liberty to say: I have a friend to whom I can go even at midnight. And how much more when I go in the very spirit of that friendliness, manifesting myself the very kindness I look for in God, seeking to help my friend as I want God to help me. When I come to God in prayer, He always looks to what the aim is of my petition. If it be merely for my own comfort or joy I seek His grace, I do not receive. But if I can say that it is that He may be glorified in my dispensing His blessings to others, I shall not ask in vain. Or if I ask for others, but want to wait until God has made me so rich, that it is no sacrifice or act of faith to aid them, I shall not obtain. But if I can say that I have already undertaken for my needy friend, that in my poverty I have already begun the work of love, because I know I had a friend Who would help me, my prayer will be heard. Oh, we know not how much the plea avails: the friendship of earth looking in its need to the friendship of heaven: 'He will give him as much as he needeth.'

But not always at once. The one thing by which man can honour and enjoy his God is faith. Intercession is part of faith's training-school. There our friendship with men and with God is tested. There it is seen whether my friendship with the needy is so real, that I will take time and sacrifice my rest, will go even at midnight and not cease until I have obtained for them what I need. There it is seen whether my friendship with God is so clear, that I can depend on Him not to turn me away and therefore pray on until He gives.

O what a deep heavenly mystery this is of persevering prayer. The God who has promised, who longs, whose fixed purpose it is to give the blessing, holds it back. It is to Him a matter of such deep importance that His friends on earth should know and fully trust their rich Friend in heaven, that He trains them, in the school of answer delayed, to find out how their perseverance really does prevail, and what the mighty power is they can wield in heaven, if they do but set themselves to it. There is a faith that sees the promise, and embraces it, and yet does not receive it (Heb. xi. 13, 39). It is when the answer to prayer does not come, and the promise we are most firmly trusting appears to be of none effect, that the trial of faith, more precious than of gold, takes place. It is in this trial that the faith that has embraced the promise is purified and strengthened and prepared in personal, holy fellowship with the living God, to see the glory of God. It takes and holds the promise until it has received the fulfilment of what it had claimed in a living truth in the unseen but living God.

Let each child of God who is seeking to work the work of love in his Father's service take courage. The parent with his child, the teacher with his class, the visitor with his district, the Bible reader with his circle, the preacher with his hearers, each one who, in his little circle, has accepted and is bearing the burden of hungry, perishing souls,—let them all take courage. Nothing is at first so strange to us as that God should really require persevering prayer, that there should be a real spiritual needs-be for importunity. To teach it us, the Master uses this almost strange parable. If the unfriendliness of a selfish earthly friend can be conquered by importunity, how much more will it avail with the heavenly Friend, who does so love to give, but is held back by our spiritual unfitness, our incapacity to possess what He has to give. O let us thank Him that in delaying His answer He is educating us up to our true position and the exercise of all our power with Him, training us to live with Him in the fellowship of undoubting faith and trust, to be indeed the friends of God. And let us hold fast the threefold cord that cannot be broken: the hungry friend needing the help, and the praying friend seeking the help, and the Mighty Friend, loving to give as much as he needeth.

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

O my Blessed Lord and Teacher! I must come to Thee in prayer. Thy teaching is so glorious, and yet too high for me to grasp. I must confess that my heart is too little to take in these thoughts of the wonderful boldness I may use with Thy Father as my Friend. Lord Jesus! I trust Thee to give me Thy Spirit with Thy Word, and to make the Word quick and powerful in my heart. I desire to keep Thy Word of this day: 'Because of his importunity he will give him as many as he needeth.'

Lord! teach me more to know the power of persevering prayer. I know that in it the Father suits Himself to our need of time for the inner life to attain its growth and ripeness, so that His grace may indeed be assimilated and made our very own. I know that He would fain thus train us to the exercise of that strong faith that does not let Him go even in the face of seeming disappointment. I know He wants to lift us to that wonderful liberty, in which we understand how really He has made the dispensing of His gift dependent on our prayer. Lord! I know this: O teach me to see it in spirit and truth.

And may it now be the joy of my life to become the almoner of my Rich Friend in heaven, to care for all the hungry and perishing, even at midnight, because I know MY FRIEND, who always gives to him who perseveres, because of his importunity, as many as he needeth. Amen.

NINTH LESSON.

‘Pray the Lord of the harvest;’
Or, Prayer provides Labourers.

‘Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest.’— Matt. ix. 37-38.

THE Lord frequently taught His disciples that they must pray, and how; but seldom what to pray. This he left to their sense of need, and the leading of the Spirit. But here we have one thing He expressly enjoins them to remember: in view of the plenteous harvest, and the need of reapers, they must cry to the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers. Just as in the parable of the friend at midnight, He would have them understand that prayer is not to be selfish; so here it is the power through which blessing can come to others. The Father is Lord of the harvest; when we pray for the Holy Spirit, we must pray for Him to prepare and send forth labourers for the work.

Strange, is it not, that He should ask His disciples to pray for this? And could He not pray Himself? And would not one prayer of His avail more than a thousand of theirs? And God, the Lord of the harvest, did He not see the need? And would not He, in His own good time, send forth labourers without their prayer? Such questions lead us up to the deepest mysteries of prayer, and its power in the Kingdom of God. The answer to such questions will convince us that prayer is indeed a power, on which the ingathering of the harvest and the coming of the Kingdom do in very truth depend.

Prayer is no form or show. The Lord Jesus was Himself the truth; everything He spake was the deepest truth. It was when (see ver. 36) ‘He saw the multitude, and was moved with compassion on them, because they were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd,’ that He called on the disciples to pray for labourers to be sent among them. He did so because He really believed that their prayer was needed, and would help. The veil which so hides the invisible world from us was wonderfully transparent to the holy human soul of Jesus. He had looked long and deep and far into the hidden connection of cause and effect in the spirit world. He had marked in God’s Word how, when God called men like Abraham and Moses, Joshua and Samuel and Daniel, and given them authority over men in His name, He had at the same time given them authority and right to call in the powers of heaven to their aid as they needed them. He knew that as to these men of old, and to Himself for a time, here upon earth, the work of God had been entrusted, so it was now about to pass over into the hands of His disciples. He knew that when this work should be given in charge to them, it would not be a mere matter of form or show, but that on them, and their being faithful or unfaithful, the success of the work would actually depend. As a single individual, within the limitations of a human body and a human life, Jesus feels how little a short visit can accomplish among these wandering sheep He sees around Him, and He longs for help to have them properly cared for. And so He tells His disciples now to begin and pray, and, when they have taken over the work from Him on earth, to make this one of the chief petitions in their prayer: That the Lord of the harvest Himself would send forth labourers into His harvest. The God who entrusted them with the work, and made it to so large extent dependent on them, gives them authority to apply to Him for labourers to help, and makes the supply dependent on their prayer.

How little Christians really feel and mourn the need of labourers in the fields of the world so white to the harvest. And how little they believe that our labour-supply depends on prayer, that prayer will really provide ‘as many as he needeth.’ Not that the dearth of labour is not known or discussed. Not that efforts are not sometimes put forth to supply the want. But how little the burden of the sheep wandering without a Shepherd is really borne in the faith that the Lord of the harvest will, in answer to prayer, send forth the labourers, and in the solemn conviction that without this prayer fields ready for reaping will be left to perish. And yet it is so. So wonderful is the surrender of His work into the hands of His Church, so dependent has the Lord made Himself on them as His body, through whom alone His work can be done, so real is the power which the Lord gives His people to exercise in heaven and earth, that the number of the labourers and the measure of the harvest does actually depend upon their prayer.

Solemn thought! O why is it that we do not obey the injunction of the Master more heartily, and cry more earnestly for labourers? There are two reasons for this. The one is: We miss the compassion of Jesus, which gave rise to this request for prayer. When believers learn that to love their neighbours as themselves, that to live entirely for God’s glory in their fellow-men, is the Father’s first commandment to His redeemed ones, they will accept of the perishing ones as the charge entrusted to them by their Lord. And, accepting them not only as a field of labour, but as the objects of loving care and interest, it will not be long before compassion towards the hopelessly perishing will touch their heart, and the cry ascend with an earnestness till then unknown: Lord! send

labourers. The other reason for the neglect of the command, the want of faith, will then make itself felt, but will be overcome as our pity pleads for help. We believe too little in the power of prayer to bring about definite results. We do not live close enough to God, and are not enough entirely given up to His service and Kingdom, to be capable of the confidence that He will give it in answer to our prayer. O let us pray for a life so one with Christ, that His compassion may stream into us, and His Spirit be able to assure us that our prayer avails.

Such prayer will ask and obtain a twofold blessing. There will first be the desire for the increase of men entirely given up to the service of God. It is a terrible blot upon the Church of Christ that there are times when actually men cannot be found for the service of the Master as ministers, missionaries, or teachers of God’s Word. As God’s children make this a matter of supplication for their own circle or Church, it will be given. The Lord Jesus is now Lord of the harvest. He has been exalted to bestow gifts—the gifts of the Spirit. His chief gifts are men filled with the Spirit. But the supply and distribution of the gifts depend on the co-operation of Head and members. It is just prayer will lead to such co-operation; the believing suppliants will be stirred to find the men and the means for the work.

The other blessing to be asked will not be less. Every believer is a labourer; not one of God’s children who has not been redeemed for service, and has not his work waiting. It must be our prayer that the Lord would so fill all His people with the spirit of devotion, that not one may be found standing idle in the vineyard. Wherever there is a complaint of the want of helpers, or of fit helpers in God’s work, prayer has the promise of a supply. There is no Sunday school or district visiting, no Bible reading or rescue work, where God is not ready and able to provide. It may take time and importunity, but the command of Christ to ask the Lord of the harvest is the pledge that the prayer will be heard: ‘I say unto you, he will arise and give him as many as he needeth.’

Solemn, blessed thought! this power has been given us in prayer to provide in the need of the world, to secure the servants for God’s work. The Lord of the harvest will hear. Christ, who called us so specially to pray thus, will support our prayers offered in His name and interest. Let us set apart time and give ourselves to this part of our intercessory work. It will lead us into the fellowship of that compassionate heart of His that led Him to call for our prayers. It will elevate us to the insight of our regal position, as those whose will counts for something with the great God in the advancement of His Kingdom. It will make us feel how really we are God’s fellow-workers on earth, to whom a share in His work has in downright earnest been entrusted. It will make us partakers in the soul travail, but also in the soul satisfaction of Jesus, as we know how, in answer to our prayer, blessing has been given that otherwise would not have come.

‘LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

Blessed Lord! Thou hast this day again given us another of Thy wondrous lessons to learn. We humbly ask Thee, O give us to see aright the spiritual realities of which Thou hast been speaking. There is the harvest which is so large, and perishing, as it waits for sleepy disciples to give the signal for labourers to come. Lord, teach us to look out upon it with a heart moved with compassion and pity. There are the labourers, so few. Lord, show us how terrible the sin of the want of prayer and faith, of which this is the token. And there is the Lord of the harvest, so able and ready to send them forth. Lord, show us how He does indeed wait for the prayer to which He has bound His answer. And there are the disciples, to whom the commission to pray has been given: Lord, show us how Thou canst pour down Thy Spirit and breathe upon them, so that Thy compassion and the faith in Thy promise shall rouse them to unceasing, prevailing prayer.

O our Lord! we cannot understand how Thou canst entrust such work and give such power to men so slothful and unfaithful. We thank Thee for all whom Thou art teaching to cry day and night for labourers to be sent forth. Lord, breathe Thine own Spirit on all Thy children, that they may learn to live for this one thing alone—the Kingdom and glory of their Lord—and become fully awake to the faith of what their prayer can accomplish. And let all our hearts in this, as in every petition, be filled with the assurance that prayer, offered in loving faith in the living God, will bring certain and abundant answer. Amen.

TENTH LESSON.

‘What wilt thou?’
Or, Prayer must be Definite.

‘And Jesus answered him, and said, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?’—Mark x. 51; Luke xviii. 41.

THE blind man had been crying out aloud, and that a great deal, ‘Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.’ The cry had reached the ear of the Lord; He knew what he wanted, and was ready to grant it him. But ere He does it, He asks him: ‘What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?’ He wants to hear from his own lips, not only the general petition for mercy, but the distinct expression of what his desire was. Until he speaks it out, he is not healed.

There is now still many a suppliant to whom the Lord puts the same question, and who cannot, until it has been answered, get the aid he ask. Our prayers must not be a vague appeal to His mercy, an indefinite cry for blessing, but the distinct expression of definite need. Not that His loving heart does not understand our cry, or is not ready to hear. But He desires it for our own sakes. Such definite prayer teaches us to know our own needs better. It demands time, and thought, and self-scrutiny to find out what really is our greatest need. It searches us and puts us to the test as to whether our desires are honest and real, such as we are ready to persevere in. It leads us to judge whether our desires are according to God’s Word, and whether we really believe that we shall receive the things we ask. It helps us to wait for the special answer, and to mark it when it comes.

And yet how much of our prayer is vague and pointless. Some cry for mercy, but take not the trouble to know what mercy must do for them. Others ask, perhaps, to be delivered from sin, but do not begin by bringing any sin by name from which the deliverance may be claimed. Still others pray for God’s blessing on those around them, for the outpouring of God’s Spirit on their land or the world, and yet have no special field where they wait and expect to see the answer. To all the Lord says: And what is it now you really want and expect Me to do? Every Christian has but limited powers, and as he must have his own special field of labour in which he works, so with his prayers too. Each believer has his own circle, his family, his friends, his neighbours. If he were to take one or more of these by name, he would find that this really brings him into the training-school of faith, and leads to personal and pointed dealing with his God. It is when in such distinct matters we have in faith claimed and received answers, that our more general prayers will be believing and effectual.

We all know with what surprise the whole civilised world heard of the way in which trained troops were repulsed by the Transvaal Boers at Majuba. And to what did they owe their success? In the armies of Europe the soldier fires upon the enemy standing in large masses, and never thinks of seeking an aim for every bullet. In hunting game the Boer had learnt a different lesson: his practised eye knew to send every bullet on its special message, to seek and find its man. Such aiming must gain the day in the spiritual world too. As long as in prayer we just pour out our hearts in a multitude of petitions, without taking time to see whether every petition is sent with the purpose and expectation of getting an answer, not many will reach the mark. But if, as in silence of soul we bow before the Lord, we were to ask such questions as these: What is now really my desire? do I desire it in faith, expecting to receive? am I now ready to place and leave it in the Father’s bosom? is it a settled thing between God and me that I am to have the answer? we should learn so to pray that God would see and we would know what we really expect.

It is for this, among other reasons, that the Lord warns us against the vain repetitions of the Gentiles, who think to be heard for their much praying. We often hear prayers of great earnestness and fervour, in which a multitude of petitions are poured forth, but to which the Saviour would undoubtedly answer ‘What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?’ If I am in a strange land, in the interests of the business which my father owns, I would certainly write two different sorts of letters. There will be family letters giving expression to all the intercourse to which affection prompts; and there will be business letters, containing orders for what I need. And there may be letters in which both are found. The answers will correspond to the letters. To each sentence of the letters containing the family news I do not expect a special answer. But for each order I send I am confident of an answer whether the desired article has been forwarded. In our dealings with God the business element must not be wanting. With our expression of need and sin, of love and faith and consecration, there must be the pointed statement of what we ask and expect to receive; it is in the answer that the Father loves to give us the token of His approval and acceptance.

But the word of the Master teaches us more. He does not say, What dost thou wish? but, What does thou will? One often wishes for a thing without willing it. I wish to have a certain article, but I find the price too high; I resolve not to take it; I wish, but do not will

to have it. The sluggard wishes to be rich, but does not will it. Many a one wishes to be saved, but perishes because he does not will it. The will rules the whole heart and life; if I really will to have anything that is within my reach, I do not rest till I have it. And so, when Jesus says to us, ‘What wilt thou?’ He asks whether it is indeed our purpose to have what we ask at any price, however great the sacrifice. Dost thou indeed so will to have it that, though He delay it long, thou dost not hold thy peace till He hear thee? Alas! how many prayers are wishes, sent up for a short time and then forgotten, or sent up year after year as matter of duty, while we rest content with the prayer without the answer.

But, it may be asked, is it not best to make our wishes known to God, and then to leave it to Him to decide what is best, without seeking to assert our will? By no means. This is the very essence of the prayer of faith, to which Jesus sought to train His disciples, that it does not only make known its desire and then leave the decision to God. That would be the prayer of submission, for cases in which we cannot know God’s will. But the prayer of faith, finding God’s will in some promise of the Word, pleads for that till it come. In Matthew (ix. 28) we read Jesus said to the blind man: ‘Believe ye that I can do this?’ Here, in Mark, He says: ‘What wilt thou that I should do?’ In both cases He said that faith had saved them. And so He said to the Syrophenician woman, too: ‘Great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.’ Faith is nothing but the purpose of the will resting on God’s word, and saying: I must have it. To believe truly is to will firmly.

But is not such a will at variance with our dependence on God and our submission to Him? By no means; it is much rather the true submission that honours God. It is only when the child has yielded his own will in entire surrender to the Father, that he receives from the Father liberty and power to will what he would have. But, when once the believer has accepted the will of God, as revealed through the Word and Spirit, as his will, too, then it is the will of God that His child should use this renewed will in His service. The will is the highest power in the soul; grace wants above everything to sanctify and restore this will, one of the chief traits of God’s image, to full and free exercise. As a son, who only lives for his father’s interests, who seeks not his own but his father’s will is trusted by the father with his business, so God speaks to His child in all truth, ‘What wilt thou?’ It is often spiritual sloth that, under the appearance of humility, professes to have no will, because it fears the trouble of searching out the will of God, or, when found, the struggle of claiming it in faith. True humility is ever in company with strong faith, which only seeks to know what is according to the will of God, and then boldly claims the fulfilment of the promise: ‘Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.’

‘LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

Lord Jesus! teach me to pray with all my heart and strength, that there may be no doubt with Thee or with me as to what I have asked. May I so know what I desire that, even as my petitions are recorded in heaven, I can record them on earth too, and note each answer as it comes. And may my faith in what Thy Word has promised be so clear that the Spirit may indeed work in me the liberty to will that it shall come. Lord! renew, strengthen, sanctify wholly my will for the work of effectual prayer.

Blessed Saviour! I do beseech Thee to reveal to me the wonderful condescension Thou showest us, thus asking us to say what we will that Thou shouldest do, and promising to do whatever we will. Son of God! I cannot understand it; I can only believe that Thou hast indeed redeemed us wholly for Thyself, and dost seek to make the will, as our noblest part, Thy most efficient servant. Lord! I do most unreservedly yield my will to Thee, as the power through which Thy Spirit is to rule my whole being. Let Him take possession of it, lead it into the truth of Thy promises, and make it so strong in prayer that I may ever hear Thy voice saying: ‘Great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.’ Amen.

ELEVENTH LESSON.

‘Believe that ye have received;’
Or, The Faith that Takes.

‘Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for,
believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them.’—Mark xi. 24

WHAT a promise! so large, so Divine, that our little hearts cannot take it in, and in every possible way seek to limit it to what we think safe or probable; instead of allowing it, in its quickening power and energy, just as He gave it, to enter in, and to enlarge our hearts to the measure of what His love and power are really ready to do for us. Faith is very far from being a mere conviction of the truth of God’s word, or a conclusion drawn from certain premises. It is the ear which has heard God say what He will do, the eye which has seen Him doing it, and, therefore, where there is true faith, it is impossible but the answer must come. If we only see to it that we do the one thing that He asks of us as we pray: BELIEVE that ye have received; He will see to it that He does the thing He has promised: ‘Ye shall have them.’ The key-note of Solomon’s prayer (2 Chron. vi. 4), ‘Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who hath with His hands fulfilled that which He spake with His mouth to my father David,’ is the key-note of all true prayer: the joyful adoration of a God whose hand always secures the fulfilment of what His mouth hath spoken. Let us in this spirit listen to the promise Jesus gives; each part of it has its Divine message.

‘All things whatsoever.’ At this first word our human wisdom at once begins to doubt and ask: This surely cannot be literally true? But if it be not, why did the Master speak it, using the very strongest expression He could find: ‘All things whatsoever.’ And it is not as if this were the only time He spoke thus; is it not He who also said, ‘If thou canst believe, ALL THINGS are possible to him that believeth;’ ‘If ye have faith, NOTHING shall be impossible to you.’ Faith is so wholly the work of God’s Spirit through His word in the prepared heart of the believing disciple, that it is impossible that the fulfilment should not come; faith is the pledge and forerunner of the coming answer. Yes, ‘ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye receive.’ The tendency of human reason is to interpose here, and with certain qualifying clauses, ‘if expedient,’ ‘if according to God’s will,’ to break the force of a statement which appears dangerous. O let us beware of dealing thus with the Master’s words. His promise is most literally true. He wants His oft repeated ‘ALL THINGS’ to enter into our hearts, and reveal to us how mighty the power of faith is, how truly the Head calls the members to share with Him in His power, how wholly our Father places His power at the disposal of the child that wholly trusts Him. In this ‘all things’ faith is to have its food and strength: as we weaken it we weaken faith. The WHATSOEVER is unconditional: the only condition is what is implied in the believing. Ere we can believe we must find out and know what God’s will is’ believing is the exercise of a soul surrendered and given up to the influence of the Word and the Spirit; but when once we do believe nothing shall be impossible. God forbid that we should try and bring down His ALL THINGS to the level of what we think possible. Let us now simply take Christ’s ‘WHATSOEVER’ as the measure and the hope of our faith: it is a seed-word which, if taken just as He gives it, and kept in the heart, will unfold itself and strike root, fill our life with its fulness, and bring forth fruit abundantly.

‘All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for.’ It is in prayer that these ‘all things’ are to be brought to God, to be asked and received of Him. The faith that receives them is the fruit of the prayer. In one aspect there must be faith before there can be prayer; in another the faith is the outcome and the growth of prayer. It is in the personal presence of the Saviour, in intercourse with Him, that faith rises to grasp what at first appeared too high. It is in prayer that we hold up our desire to the light of God’s Holy Will, that our motives are tested, and proof given whether we ask indeed in the name of Jesus, and only for the glory of God. It is in prayer that we wait for the leading of the Spirit to show us whether we are asking the right thing and in the right spirit. It is in prayer that we become conscious of our want of faith, that we are led on to say to the Father that we do believe, and that we prove the reality of our faith by the confidence with which we persevere. It is in prayer that Jesus teaches and inspires faith. He that waits to pray, or loses heart in prayer, because he does not yet feel the faith needed to get the answer, will never learn to believe. He who begins to pray and ask will find the Spirit of faith is given nowhere so surely as at the foot of the Throne.

‘Believe that ye have received.’ It is clear that what we are to believe is, that we receive the very things we ask. The Saviour does not hint that because the Father knows what is best He may give us something else. The very mountain faith bids depart is cast into the sea. There is a prayer in which, in everything, we make known our requests with prayer and supplication, and the reward is the sweet peace of God keeping heart and mind. This is the prayer of trust. It has reference to things of which we cannot find out if God is going to give them. As children we make known our desires in the countless things of daily life, and leave it to the Father to give or not as He thinks best. But the prayer of faith of which Jesus speaks is something different, something higher. When, whether in

the greater interests of the Master's work, or in the lesser concerns of our daily life, the soul is led to see how there is nothing that so honours the Father as the faith that is assured that He will do what He has said in giving us whatsoever we ask for, and takes its stand on the promise as brought home by the Spirit, it may know most certainly that it does receive exactly what it asks. Just see how clearly the Lord sets this before us in verse 23: 'Whosoever shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass, he shall have it.' This is the blessing of the prayer of faith of which Jesus speaks.

'Believe that ye have received.' This is the word of central importance, of which the meaning is too often misunderstood. Believe that you have received! now, while praying, the thing you ask for. It may only be later that you shall have it in personal experience, that you shall see what you believe; but now, without seeing, you are to believe that it has been given you of the Father in heaven. The receiving or accepting of an answer to prayer is just like the receiving or accepting of Jesus or of pardon, a spiritual thing, an act of faith apart from all feeling. When I come as a supplicant for pardon, I believe that Jesus in heaven is for me, and so I receive or take Him. When I come as a supplicant for any special gift, which is according to God's word, I believe that what I ask is given me: I believe that I have it, I hold it in faith; I thank God that it is mine. 'If we know that He heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of Him.'

'And ye shall have them.' That is, the gift which we first hold in faith as bestowed upon us in heaven will also become ours in personal experience. But will it be needful to pray longer if once we know we have been heard and have received what we asked? There are cases in which such prayer will not be needful, in which the blessing is ready to break through at once, if we but hold fast our confidence, and prove our faith by praising for what we have received, in the face of our not yet having it in experience. There are other cases in which the faith that has received needs to be still further tried and strengthened in persevering prayer. God only knows when everything in and around us is fully ripe for the manifestation of the blessing that has been given to faith. Elijah knew for certain that rain would come; God had promised it; and yet he had to pray the seven times. And that prayer was no show or play; an intense spiritual reality in the heart of him who lay pleading there, and in the heaven above where it had its effectual work to do. It is 'through faith and patience we inherit the promises.' Faith says most confidently, I have received it. Patience perseveres in prayer until the gift bestowed in heaven is seen on earth. 'Believe that ye have received, and ye shall have.' Between the have received in heaven, and the shall have of earth, believe: believing praise and prayer is the link.

And now, remember one thing more: It is Jesus who said this. As we see heaven thus opened to us, and the Father on the Throne offering to give us whatsoever we ask in faith, our hearts feel full of shame that we have so little availed ourselves of our privilege, and full of fear lest our feeble faith still fail to grasp what is so clearly placed within our reach. There is one thing must make us strong and full of hope: it is Jesus who has brought us this message from the Father. He Himself, when He was on earth, lived the life of faith and prayer. It was when the disciples expressed their surprise at what He had done to the fig-tree, that He told them that the very same life He led could be theirs; that they could not only command the fig-tree, but the very mountain, and it must obey. And He is our life: all He was on earth He is in us now; all He teaches He really gives. He is Himself the Author and the Perfecter of our faith: He gives the spirit of faith; let us not be afraid that such faith is not meant for us. It is meant for every child of the Father; it is within reach of each one who will but be childlike, yielding himself to the Father's Will and Love, trusting the Father's Word and Power. Dear fellow-Christian! let the thought that this word comes through Jesus, the Son, our Brother, give us courage, and let our answer be: Yea, Blessed Lord, we do believe Thy Word, we do believe that we receive.

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

Blessed Lord! Thou didst come from the Father to show us all His love, and all the treasures of blessing that love is waiting to bestow. Lord! Thou hast this day again flung the gates so wide open, and given us such promises as to our liberty in prayer, that we must blush that our poor hearts have so little taken it in. It has been too large for us to believe.

Lord! we now look up to Thee to teach us to take and keep and use this precious word of Thine: 'All things whatsoever ye ask, believe that ye have received.' Blessed Jesus! it is Thy self in whom our faith must be rooted if it is to grow strong. Thy work has freed us wholly from the power of sin, and opened the way to the Father; Thy Love is ever longing to bring us into the full fellowship of Thy glory and power; Thy Spirit ipward into a life of perfect faith and confidence; we are assured that in Thy teaching we shall learn to pray the prayer of faith. Thou wilt train us to pray so that we believe that we receive, to believe that we really have what we ask. Lord! teach me so to know and trust and love Thee, so to live and abide in Thee, that all my prayers rise up and come before God in Thee, and that my soul may have in Thee the assurance that I am heard. Amen.

TWELFTH LESSON.

‘Have faith in God;’
Or, The Secret of believing Prayer.

‘Jesus, answering, said unto them, Have faith in God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what He saith cometh to pass; he shall have it. Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them.’—Mark xi. 22-24.

THE promise of answer to prayer which formed our yesterday’s lesson is one of the most wonderful in all Scripture. In how many hearts it has raised the question: How ever can I attain the faith that knows that it receives all it asks?

It is this question our Lord would answer today. Ere He gave that wonderful promise to His disciples, He spoke another word, in which He points out where the faith in the answer to prayer takes its rise, and ever finds its strength. HAVE FAITH IN GOD: this word precedes the other, Have faith in the promise of an answer to prayer. The power to believe a promise depends entirely, but only, on faith in the promiser. Trust in the person begets trust in his word. It is only where we live and associate with God in personal, loving intercourse, where GOD HIMSELF is all to us, where our whole being is continually opened up and exposed to the mighty influences that are at work where His Holy Presence is revealed, that the capacity will be developed for believing that He gives whatsoever we ask.

This connection between faith in God and faith in His promise will become clear to us if we think what faith really is. It is often compared to the hand or the mouth, by which we take and appropriate what is offered to us. But it is of importance that we should understand that faith is also the ear by which I hear what is promised, the eye by which I see what is offered me. On this the power to take depends. I must hear the person who gives me the promise: the very tone of his voice gives me courage to believe. I must see him: in the light of his eye and countenance all fear as to my right to take passes away. The value of the promise depends on the promiser: it is on my knowledge of what the promiser is that faith in the promise depends.

It is for this reason that Jesus, ere He gives that wonderful prayer-promise, first says, ‘HAVE FAITH IN GOD.’ That is, let thine eye be open to the Living God, and gaze on Him, seeing Him who is Invisible. It is through the eye that I yield myself to the influence of what is before me; I just allow it to enter, to exert its influence, to leave its impression upon my mind. So believing God is just looking to God and what He is, allowing Him to reveal His presence, giving Him time and yielding the whole being to take in the full impression of what He is as God, the soul opened up to receive and rejoice in the overshadowing of His love. Yes, faith is the eye to which God shows what He is and does: through faith the light of His presence and the workings of His mighty power stream into the soul. As that which I see lives in me, so by faith God lives in me too.

And even so faith is also the ear through which the voice of God is always heard and intercourse with Him kept up. It is through the Holy Spirit the Father speaks to us; the Son is the Word, the substance of what God says; the Spirit is the living voice. This the child of God needs to lead and guide him; the secret voice from heaven must teach him, as it taught Jesus, what to say and what to do. An ear opened towards God, that is, a believing heart waiting on Him, to hear what He says, will hear Him speak. The words of God will not only be the words of a Book, but, proceeding from the mouth of God, they will be spirit and truth, life and power. They will bring in deed and living experience what are otherwise only thoughts. Through this opened ear the soul tarries under the influence of the life and power of God Himself. As the words I hear enter the mind and dwell and work there, so through faith God enters the heart, and dwells and works there.

When faith now is in full exercise as eye and ear, as the faculty of the soul by which we see and hear God, then it will be able to exercise its full power as hand and mouth, by which we appropriate God and His blessing. The power of reception will depend entirely on the power of spiritual perception. For this reason Jesus said, ere He gave the promise that God would answer believing prayer: ‘HAVE FAITH IN GOD.’ Faith is simply surrender: I yield myself to the impression the tidings I hear make on me. By faith I yield myself to the living God. His glory and love fill my heart, and have the mastery over my life. Faith is fellowship; I give myself up to the influence of the friend who makes me a promise, and become linked to him by it. And it is when we enter into this living fellowship with God Himself, in a faith that always sees and hears Him, that it becomes easy and natural to believe His promise as to prayer. Faith in the promise is the fruit of faith in the promiser: the prayer of faith is rooted in the life of faith. And in

this way the faith that prays effectually is indeed a gift of God. Not as something that He bestows or infuses at once, but in a far deeper and truer sense, as the blessed disposition or habit of soul which is wrought and grows up in us in a life of intercourse with Him. Surely for one who knows his Father well, and lives in constant close intercourse with Him, it is a simple thing to believe the promise that He will do the will of His child who lives in union with Himself.

It is because very many of God's children do not understand this connection between the life of faith and the prayer of faith that their experience of the power of prayer is so limited. When they desire earnestly to obtain an answer from God, they fix their whole heart upon the promise, and try their utmost to grasp that promise in faith. When they do not succeed, they are ready to give up hope; the promise is true, but it is beyond their power to take hold of it in faith. Listen to the lesson Jesus teaches us this day: HAVE FAITH IN GOD, the Living God: let faith look to God more than the thing promised: it is His love, His power, His living presence will waken and work the faith. A physician would say to one asking for some means to get more strength in his arms and hands to seize and hold, that his whole constitution must be built up and strengthened. So the cure of a feeble faith is alone to be found in the invigoration of our whole spiritual life by intercourse with God. Learn to believe in God, to take hold of God, to let God take possession of thy life, and it will be easy to take hold of the promise. He that knows and trusts God finds it easy to trust the promise too.

Just note how distinctly this comes out in the saints of old. Every special exhibition of the power of faith was the fruit of a special revelation of God. See it in Abraham: 'And the word of the Lord came unto Abram, saying, Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield. And He brought him forth abroad, and said . . . AND HE BELIEVED THE LORD.' And later again: 'The Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, I am God Almighty. And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold my covenant is with thee.' It was the revelation of God Himself that gave the promise its living power to enter the heart and work the faith. Because they knew God, these men of faith could not do anything but trust His promise. God's promise will be to us what God Himself is. It is the man who walks before the Lord, and falls upon his face to listen while the living God speaks to him, who will really receive the promise. Though we have God's promises in the Bible, with full liberty to take them, the spiritual power is wanting, except as God Himself speaks them to us. And He speaks to those who walk and live with Him. Therefore, HAVE FAITH IN GOD: let faith be all eye and ear, the surrender to let God make His full impression, and reveal Himself fully in the soul. Count it one of the chief blessings of prayer to exercise faith in God, as the Living Mighty God who waits to fulfil in us all the good pleasure of His will, and the work of faith with power. See in Him the God of Love, whose delight it is to bless and impart Himself. In such worship of faith in God the power will speedily come to believe the promise too: 'ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER YE ASK, BELIEVE THAT YE RECEIVE.' Yes, see that thou dost in faith make God thine own; the promise will be thine too.

Precious lessons that Jesus has to teach us this day. We seek God's gifts: God wants to give us HIMSELF first. We think of prayer as the power to draw down good gifts from heaven; Jesus as the means to draw ourselves up to God. We want to stand at the door and cry; Jesus would have us first enter in and realize that we are friends and children. Let us accept the teaching. Let every experience of the littleness of our faith in prayer urge us first to have and exercise more faith in the living God, and in such faith to yield ourselves to Him. A heart full of God has power for the prayer of faith. Faith in God begets faith in the promise, in the promise too of an answer to prayer.

Therefore, child of God, take time, take time, to bow before Him, to wait on Him to reveal Himself. Take time, and let thy soul in holy awe and worship exercise and express its faith in the Infinite One, and as He imparts Himself and takes possession of thee, the prayer of faith will crown thy faith in God.

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

O my God! I do believe in Thee. I believe in Thee as the Father, Infinite in Thy Love and Power. And as the Son, my Redeemer and my Life. And as the Holy Spirit, Comforter and Guide and Strength. Three-One God, I have faith in Thee. I know and am sure that all that Thou art Thou art to me, that all Thou hast promised Thou wilt perform.

Lord Jesus! increase this faith. Teach me to take time, and wait and worship in the Holy Presence until my faith takes in all there is in my God for me. Let it see Him as the Fountain of all Life, working with Almighty Strength to accomplish His will on the world and in me. Let it see Him in His love longing to meet and fulfil my desires. Let it so take possession of my heart and life that through faith God alone may dwell there. Lord Jesus, help me! with my whole heart would I believe in God. Let faith in God each moment fill me.

O my Blessed Saviour! how can Thy Church glorify Thee, how can it fulfil that work of intercession through which Thy kingdom

must come, unless our whole life be FAITH IN GOD. Blessed Lord! speak Thy Word, ‘HAVE FAITH IN GOD,’ unto the depths of our souls.

THIRTEENTH LESSON.

‘Prayer and fasting;’
Or, The Cure of Unbelief.

‘Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, nothing shall be impossible to you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting’—Matt. xvii. 19-21.

WHEN the disciples saw Jesus cast the evil spirit out of the epileptic whom ‘they could not cure,’ they asked the Master for the cause of their failure. He had given them ‘power and authority over all devils, and to cure all diseases.’ They had often exercised that power, and joyfully told how the devils were subject to them. And yet now, while He was on the Mount, they had utterly failed. That there had been nothing in the will of God or in the nature of the case to render deliverance impossible, had been proved: at Christ’s bidding the evil spirit had gone out. From their expression, ‘Why could we not?’ it is evident that they had wished and sought to do so; they had probably used the Master’s name, and called upon the evil spirit to go out. Their efforts had been vain, and in presence of the multitude, they had been put to shame. ‘Why could we not?’

Christ’s answer was direct and plain: ‘Because of your unbelief.’ The cause of His success and their failure, was not owing to His having a special power to which they had no access. No; the reason was not far to seek. He had so often taught them that there is one power, that of faith, to which, in the kingdom of darkness, as in the kingdom of God, everything must bow; in the spiritual world failure has but one cause, the want of faith. Faith is the one condition on which all Divine power can enter into man and work through him. It is the susceptibility of the unseen: man’s will yielded up to, and moulded by, the will of God. The power they had received to cast out devils, they did not hold in themselves as a permanent gift or possession; the power was in Christ, to be received, and held, and used by faith alone, living faith in Himself. Had they been full of faith in Him as Lord and Conqueror in the spirit-world, had they been full of faith in Him as having given them authority to cast out in His name, this faith would have given them the victory. ‘Because of your unbelief’ was, for all time, the Master’s explanation and reproof of impotence and failure in His Church.

But such want of faith must have a cause too. Well might the disciples have asked: ‘And why could we not believe? Our faith has cast out devils before this: why have we now failed in believing? ‘The Master proceeds to tell them ere they ask: ‘This kind goeth not out but by fasting and prayer.’ As faith is the simplest, so it is the highest exercise of the spiritual life, where our spirit yields itself in perfect receptivity to God’s Spirit and so is strengthened to its highest activity. This faith depends entirely upon the state of the spiritual life; only when this is strong and in full health, when the Spirit of God has full sway in our life, is there the power of faith to do its mighty deeds. And therefore Jesus adds: ‘Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by fasting and prayer.’ The faith that can overcome such stubborn resistance as you have just seen in this evil spirit, Jesus tells them, is not possible except to men living in very close fellowship with God, and in very special separation from the world—in prayer and fasting. And so He teaches us two lessons in regard to prayer of deep importance. The one, that faith needs a life of prayer in which to grow and keep strong. The other, that prayer needs fasting for its full and perfect development.

Faith needs a life of prayer for its full growth. In all the different parts of the spiritual life, there is such close union, such unceasing action and re-action, that each may be both cause and effect. Thus it is with faith. There can be no true prayer without faith; some measure of faith must precede prayer. And yet prayer is also the way to more faith; there can be no higher degrees of faith except through much prayer. This is the lesson Jesus teaches here. There is nothing needs so much to grow as our faith. ‘Your faith groweth exceedingly,’ is said of one Church. When Jesus spoke the words, ‘According to your faith be it unto you,’ He announced the law of the kingdom, which tells us that all have not equal degrees of faith, that the same person has not always the same degree, and that the measure of faith must always determine the measure of power and of blessing. If we want to know where and how our faith is to grow, the Master points us to the throne of God. It is in prayer, in the exercise of the faith I have, in fellowship with the living God, that faith can increase. Faith can only live by feeding on what is Divine, on God Himself.

It is in the adoring worship of God, the waiting on Him and for Him, the deep silence of soul that yields itself for God to reveal Himself, that the capacity for knowing and trusting God will be developed. It is as we take His word from the Blessed Book, and bring it to Himself, asking him to speak it to us with His living loving voice, that the power will come fully to believe and receive

the word as God's own word to us. It is in prayer, in living contact with God in living faith, that faith, the power to trust God, and in that trust, to accept everything He says, to accept every possibility He has offered to our faith will become strong in us. Many Christians cannot understand what is meant by the much prayer they sometimes hear spoken of: they can form no conception, nor do they feel the need, of spending hours with God. But what the Master says, the experience of His people has confirmed: men of strong faith are men of much prayer.

This just brings us back again to the lesson we learned when Jesus, before telling us to believe that we receive what we ask, first said, 'Have faith in God.' It is God, the living God, into whom our faith must strike its roots deep and broad; then it will be strong to remove mountains and cast out devils. 'If ye have faith, nothing shall be impossible to you.' Oh! if we do but give ourselves up to the work God has for us in the world, coming into contact with the mountains and the devils there are to be cast away and cast out, we should soon comprehend the need there is of much faith, and of much prayer, as the soil in which alone faith can be cultivated. Christ Jesus is our life, the life of our faith too. It is His life in us that makes us strong, and makes us simple to believe. It is in the dying to self which much prayer implies, in closer union to Jesus, that the spirit of faith will come in power. Faith needs prayer for its full growth.

And prayer needs fasting for its full growth: this is the second lesson. Prayer is the one hand with which we grasp the invisible; fasting, the other, with which we let loose and cast away the visible. In nothing is man more closely connected with the world of sense than in his need of food, and his enjoyment of it. It was the fruit, good for food, with which man was tempted and fell in Paradise. It was with bread to be made of stones that Jesus, when an hungered, was tempted in the wilderness, and in fasting that He triumphed. The body has been redeemed to be a temple of the Holy Spirit; it is in body as well as spirit, it is very specially, Scripture says, in eating and drinking, we are to glorify God. It is to be feared that there are many Christians to whom this eating to the glory of God has not yet become a spiritual reality. And the first thought suggested by Jesus' words in regard to fasting and prayer, is, that it is only in a life of moderation and temperance and self-denial that there will be the heart or the strength to pray much.

But then there is also its more literal meaning. Sorrow and anxiety cannot eat: joy celebrates its feasts with eating and drinking. There may come times of intense desire, when it is strongly felt how the body, with its appetites, lawful though they be, still hinder the spirit in its battle with the powers of darkness, and the need is felt of keeping it under. We are creatures of the senses: our mind is helped by what comes to us embodied in concrete form; fasting helps to express, to deepen, and to confirm the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything, to sacrifice ourselves, to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God. And He who accepted the fasting and sacrifice of the Son, knows to value and accept and reward with spiritual power the soul that is thus ready to give up all for Christ and His kingdom.

And then follows a still wider application. Prayer is the reaching out after God and the unseen; fasting, the letting go of all that is of the seen and temporal. While ordinary Christians imagine that all that is not positively forbidden and sinful is lawful to them, and seek to retain as much as possible of this world, with its property, its literature, its enjoyments, the truly consecrated soul is as the soldier who carries only what he needs for the warfare. Laying aside every weight, as well as the easily besetting sin, afraid of entangling himself with the affairs of this life, he seeks to lead a Nazarite life, as one specially set apart for the Lord and His service. Without such voluntary separation, even from what is lawful, no one will attain power in prayer: this kind goeth not out but by fasting and prayer.

Disciples of Jesus! who have asked the Master to teach you to pray, come now and accept His lessons. He tells you that prayer is the path to faith, strong faith, that can cast out devils. He tells you: 'If ye have faith, nothing shall be impossible to you;' let this glorious promise encourage you to pray much. Is the prize not worth the price? Shall we not give up all to follow Jesus in the path He opens to us here; shall we not, if need be, fast? Shall we not do anything that neither the body nor the world around hinder us in our great life-work,—having intercourse with our God in prayer, that we may become men of faith, whom He can use in His work of saving the world.

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

O Lord Jesus! how continually Thou hast to reprove us for our unbelief! How strange it must appear to Thee, this terrible incapacity of trusting our Father and His promises. Lord! let Thy reproof, with its searching, 'Because of your unbelief,' sink into the very depths of our hearts, and reveal to us how much of the sin and suffering around us is our blame. And then teach us, Blessed Lord, that there is a place where faith can be learned and gained,—even in the prayer and fasting that brings into living and abiding fellowship with Thyself and the Father.

O Saviour! Thou Thyself art the Author and the Perfecter of our faith; teach us what it is to let Thee live in us by Thy Holy Spirit. Lord! our efforts and prayers for grace to believe have been so unavailing. We know why it was: we sought for strength in ourselves to be given from Theeat length teach us the mystery of Thy life in us, and how Thou, by Thy Spirit, dost undertake to live in us the life of faith, to see to it that our faith shall not fail. O let us see that our faith will just be a part of that wonderful prayer-life which Thou givest in them who expect their training for the ministry of intercession, not in word and thought only, but in the Holy Unction Thou givest, the inflowing of the Spirit of Thine own life. And teach us how, in fasting and prayer, we may grow up to the faith to which nothing shall be impossible. Amen.

NOTE

At the time when Blumhardt was passing through his terrible conflict with the evil spirits in those who were possessed, and seeking to cast them out by prayer, he often wondered what it was that hindered the answer. One day a friend, to whom he had spoken of his trouble, directed his attention to our Lord's words about fasting. Blumhardt resolved to give himself to fasting, sometimes for more than thirty hours. From reflection and experience he gained the conviction that it is of more importance than is generally thought. He says, 'Inasmuch as the fasting is before God, a practical proof that the thing we ask is to us a matter of true and pressing interest, and inasmuch as in a high degree it strengthens the intensity and power of the prayer, and becomes the unceasing practical expression of a prayer without words, I could believe that it would not be without efficacy, especially as the Master's words had reference to a case like the present. I tried it, without telling any one, and in truth the later conflict was extraordinarily lightened by it. I could speak with much greater restfulness and decision. I did not require to be so long present with the sick one; and I felt that I could influence without being present.'

FOURTEENTH LESSON.

'When ye stand praying, forgive;'
Or, Prayer and Love.

'And whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.'—Mark xi. 25.

THESE words follow immediately on the great prayer-promise, 'All things whatsoever ye pray, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them.' We have already seen how the words that preceded that promise, 'Have faith in God,' taught us that in prayer all depends upon our relation to God being clear; these words that follow on it remind us that our relation with fellow-men must be clear too. Love to God and love to our neighbour are inseparable: the prayer from a heart, that is either not right with God on the one side, or with men on the other, cannot prevail. Faith and love are essential to each other.

We find that this is a thought to which our Lord frequently gave expression. In the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 23, 24), when speaking of the sixth commandment, He taught His disciples how impossible acceptable worship to the Father was if everything were not right with the brother: 'If thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.' And so later, when speaking of prayer to God, after having taught us to pray, 'Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors,' He added at the close of the prayer: 'If you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.' At the close of the parable of the unmerciful servant He applies His teaching in the words: 'So shall also my Heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.' And so here, beside the dried-up fig-tree, where He speaks of the wonderful power of faith and the prayer of faith, He all at once, apparently without connection, introduces the thought, 'Whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.' It is as if the Lord had learned during His life at Nazareth and afterwards that disobedience to the law of love to men was the great sin even of praying people, and the great cause of the feebleness of their prayer. And it is as if He wanted to lead us into His own blessed experience that nothing gives such liberty of access and such power in believing as the consciousness that we have given ourselves in love and compassion, for those whom God loves.

The first lesson taught here is that of a forgiving disposition. We pray, 'Forgive, even as we have forgiven.' Scripture says, 'Forgive one another, even as God also in Christ forgave you.' God's full and free forgiveness is to be the rule of ours with men. Otherwise our reluctant, half-hearted forgiveness, which is not forgiveness at all, will be God's rule with us. Every prayer rests upon our faith in God's pardoning grace. If God dealt with us after our sins, not one prayer could be heard. Pardon opens the door to all God's love and blessing: because God has pardoned all our sin, our prayer can prevail to obtain all we need. The deep sure ground of answer to prayer is God's forgiving love. When it has taken possession of the heart, we pray in faith. But also, when it has taken possession of the heart, we live in love. God's forgiving disposition, revealed in His love to us, becomes a disposition in us; as the power of His forgiving love shed abroad and dwelling within us, we forgive even as He forgives. If there be great and grievous injury or injustice done us, we seek first of all to possess a Godlike disposition; to be kept from a sense of wounded honour, from a desire to maintain our rights, or from rewarding the offender as he has deserved. In the little annoyances of daily life, we are watchful not to excuse the hasty temper, the sharp word, the quick judgment, with the thought that we mean no harm, that we do not keep the anger long, or that it would be too much to expect from feeble human nature, that we should really forgive the way God and Christ do. No, we take the command literally, 'Even as Christ forgave, so also do ye.' The blood that cleanses the conscience from dead works, cleanses from selfishness too; the love it reveals is pardoning love, that takes possession of us and flows through us to others. Our forgiving love to men is the evidence of the reality of God's forgiving love in us, and so the condition of the prayer of faith.

There is a second, more general lesson: our daily life in the world is made the test of our intercourse with God in prayer. How often the Christian, when he comes to pray, does his utmost to cultivate certain frames of mind which he thinks will be pleasing. He does not understand, or forgets, that life does not consist of so many loose pieces, of which now the one, then the other, can be taken up. Life is a whole, and the pious frame of the hour of prayer is judged of by God from the ordinary frame of the daily life of which the hour of prayer is but a small part. Not the feeling I call up, but the tone of my life during the day, is God's criterion of what I really am and desire. My drawing nigh to God is of one piece with my intercourse with men and earth: failure here will cause failure there. And that not only when there is the distinct consciousness of anything wrong between my neighbour and myself; but the ordinary

current of my thinking and judging, the unloving thoughts and words I allow to pass unnoticed, can hinder my prayer. The effectual prayer of faith comes out from a life given up to the will and the love of God. Not according to what I try to be when praying, but what I am when not praying, is my prayer dealt with by God.

We may gather these thoughts into a third lesson: In our life with men the one thing on which everything depends is love. The spirit of forgiveness is the spirit of love. Because God is love, He forgives: it is only when we are dwelling in love that we can forgive as God forgives. In love to the brethren we have the evidence of love to the Father, the ground of confidence before God, and the assurance that our prayer will be heard, (1 John iv. 20, iii. 18-21, 23.). 'Let us love in deed and truth; hereby shall we assure our heart before Him. If our heart condemn us not, we have boldness toward God, and whatever we ask, we receive of Him.' Neither faith nor work will profit if we have not love; it is love that unites with God, it is love that proves the reality of faith. As essential as in the word that precedes the great prayer-promise in Mark xi. 24, 'Have faith in God,' is this one that follows it, 'Have love to men.' The right relations to the living God above me, and the living men around me, are the conditions of effectual prayer.

This love is of special consequence when we labour for such and pray for them. We sometimes give ourselves to work for Christ, from zeal for His cause, as we call it, or for our own spiritual health, without giving ourselves in personal self-sacrificing love for those whose souls we seek. No wonder that our faith is feeble and does not conquer. To look on each wretched one, however unloveable he be, in the light of the tender love of Jesus the Shepherd seeking the lost; to see Jesus Christ in him, and to take him up, for Jesus' sake, in a heart that really loves, —this, this is the secret of believing prayer and successful effort. Jesus, in speaking of forgiveness, speaks of love as its root. Just as in the Sermon on the Mount He connected His teaching and promises about prayer with the call to be merciful, as the Father in heaven is merciful (Matt. v. 7, 9, 22, 38-48), so we see it here: a loving life is the condition of believing prayer.

It has been said: There is nothing so heart-searching as believing prayer, or even the honest effort to pray in faith. O let us not turn the edge of that self-examination by the thought that God does not hear our prayer for reasons known to Himself alone. By no means. 'Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss.' Let that word of God search us. Let us ask whether our prayer be indeed the expression of a life wholly given over to the will of God and the love of man. Love is the only soil in which faith can strike its roots and thrive. As it throws its arms up, and opens its heart heavenward, the Father always looks to see if it has them opened towards the evil and the unworthy too. In that love, not indeed the love of perfect attainment, but the love of fixed purpose and sincere obedience, faith can alone obtain the blessing. It is he who gives himself to let the love of God dwell in him, and in the practice of daily life to love as God loves, who will have the power to believe in the Love that hears his every prayer. It is the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne: it is suffering and forbearing love that prevails with God in prayer. The merciful shall obtain mercy; the meek shall inherit the earth.

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

Blessed Father! Thou art Love, and only he that abideth in love abideth in Thee and in fellowship with Thee. The Blessed Son hath this day again taught me how deeply true this is of my fellowship with Thee in prayer. O my God! let Thy love, shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Spirit, be in me a fountain of love to all around me, that out of a life in love may spring the power of believing prayer. O my Father! grant by the Holy Spirit that this may be my experience, that a life in love to all around me is the gate to a life in the love of my God. And give me especially to find in the joy with which I forgive day by day whoever might offend me, the proof that Thy forgiveness to me is a power and a life.

Lord Jesus! my Blessed Teacher! teach Thou me to forgive and to love. Let the power of Thy blood make the pardon of my sins such a reality, that forgiveness, as shown by Thee to me, and by me to others, may be the very joy of heaven. Show me whatever in my intercourse with fellowmen might hinder my fellowship with God, so that my daily life in my own home and in society may be the school in which strength and confidence are gathered for the prayer of faith. Amen.

FIFTEENTH LESSON.

'If two agree;'
Or, The Power of United Prayer

'Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them.—Matt. xviii. 19, 20.

ONE of the first lessons of our Lord in His school of prayer was: Not to be seen of men. Enter thy inner chamber; be alone with the Father. When He has thus taught us that the meaning of prayer is personal individual contact with God, He comes with a second lesson: You have need not only of secret solitary, but also of public united prayer. And He gives us a very special promise for the united prayer of two or three who agree in what they ask. As a tree has its root hidden in the ground and its stem growing up into the sunlight, so prayer needs equally for its full development the hidden secrecy in which the soul meets God alone, and the public fellowship with those who find in the name of Jesus their common meeting-place.

The reason why this must be so is plain. The bond that unites a man to his fellow-men is no less real and close than that which unites him to God: he is one with them. Grace renews not alone our relation to God but to man too. We not only learn to say 'My Father,' but 'Our Father.' Nothing would be more unnatural than that the children of a family should always meet their father separately, but never in the united expression of their desires or their love. Believers are not only members of one family, but even of one body. Just as each member of the body depends on the other, and the full action of the spirit dwelling in the body depends on the union and co-operation of all, so Christians cannot reach the full blessing God is ready to bestow through His Spirit, but as they seek and receive it in fellowship with each other. It is in the union and fellowship of believers that the Spirit can manifest His full power. It was to the hundred and twenty continuing in one place together, and praying with one accord, that the Spirit came from the throne of the glorified Lord.

The marks of true united prayer are given us in these words of our Lord. The first is agreement as to the thing asked. There must not only be generally the consent to agree with anything another may ask: there must be some special thing, matter of distinct united desire; the agreement must be, as all prayer, in spirit and in truth. In such agreement it will become very clear to us what exactly we are asking, whether we may confidently ask according to God's will, and whether we are ready to believe that we have received what we ask.

The second mark is the gathering in, or into, the Name of Jesus. We shall afterwards have much more to learn of the need and the power of the Name of Jesus in prayer; here our Lord teaches us that the Name must be the centre of union to which believers gather, the bond of union that makes them one, just as a home contains and unites all who are in it. 'The Name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and escape.' That Name is such a reality to those who understand and believe it, that to meet within it is to have Himself present. The love and unity of His disciples have to Jesus infinite attraction: 'Where two or three are gathered in my Name, there am I in the midst of them.' It is the living presence of Jesus, in the fellowship of His loving praying disciples, that gives united prayer its power.

The third mark is, the sure answer: 'It shall be done for them of my Father.' A prayer-meeting for maintaining religious fellowship, or seeking our own edification, may have its use; this was not the Saviour's view in its appointment. He meant it as a means of securing special answer to prayer. A prayer meeting without recognised answer to prayer ought to be an anomaly. When any of us have distinct desires in regard to which we feel too weak to exercise the needful faith, we ought to seek strength in the help of other. In the unity of faith and of love and of the Spirit, the power of the Name and the Presence of Jesus acts more freely and the answer comes more surely. The mark that there has been true united prayer is the fruit, the answer, the receiving of the thing we have asked: 'I say unto you, It shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.'

What an unspeakable privilege this of united prayer is, and what a power it might be. If the believing husband and wife knew that they were joined together in the Name of Jesus to experience His presence and power in united prayer (1 Peter); if friends believed what mighty help two or three praying in concert could give each other; if in every prayer meeting the coming together in the Name, the faith in the Presence, and the expectation of the answer, stood in the foreground; if in every Church united effectual prayer were regarded as one of the chief purposes for which they are banded together, the highest exercise of their power as a Church; if in the

Church universal the coming of the kingdom, the coming of the King Himself, first in the mighty outpouring of His Holy Spirit, then in His own glorious person, were really matter of unceasing united crying to God;—O who can say what blessing might come to, and through, those who thus agreed to prove God in the fulfilment of His promise.

In the Apostle Paul we see very distinctly what a reality his faith in the power of united prayer was. To the Romans he writes (xv. 30): 'I beseech you, brethren, by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayer to God for me.' He expects in answer to be delivered from his enemies, and to be prospered in his work. To the Corinthians (2 Cor. i. 11), 'God will still deliver us, ye also helping together on our behalf by your supplications;' their prayer is to have a real share in his deliverance. To the Ephesians he writes: 'With all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit for all the saints and on my behalf, that utterance may be given unto me.' His power and success in his ministry he makes to depend on their prayers. With the Philippians (i. 19) he expects that his trials will turn to his salvation and the progress of the gospel 'through your supplications and the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ.; To the Colossians (iv. 3) he adds to the injunction to continue stedfast in prayer: 'Withal praying for us too, that God may open unto us a door for the word.' And to the Thessalonians (2 Thess. iii. 1) he writes: 'Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable men.' It is everywhere evident that Paul felt himself the member of a body, on the sympathy and co-operation of which he was dependent, and that he counted on the prayers of these Churches to gain for him, what otherwise might not be given. The prayers of the Church were to him as real a factor in the work of the kingdom, as the power of God.

Who can say what power a Church could develop and exercise, if it gave itself to the work of prayer day and night for the coming of the kingdom, for God's power on His servants and His word, for the glorifying of God in the salvation of souls? Most Churches think their members are gathered into one simply to take care of and build up each other. They know not that God rules the world by the prayers of His saints; that prayer is the power by which Satan is conquered; that by prayer the Church on earth has disposal of the powers of the heavenly world. They do not remember that Jesus has, by His promise, consecrated every assembly in His Name to be a gate of heaven, where His Presence is to be felt, and His Power experienced in the Father fulfilling their desires.

We cannot sufficiently thank God for the blessed week of united prayer, with which Christendom in our days opens every year. As proof of our unity and our faith in the power of united prayer, as a training-school for the enlargement of our hearts to take in all the needs of the Church universal, as a help to united persevering prayer, it is of unspeakable value. But very specially as a stimulus to continued union in prayer in the smaller circles, its blessing has been great. And it will become even greater, as God's people recognise what it is, all to meet as one in the Name of Jesus to have His presence in the midst of a body all united in the Holy Spirit, and boldly to claim the promise that it shall be done of the Father what they agree to ask.

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY'

Blessed Lord! who didst in Thy high-priestly prayer ask so earnestly for the unity of Thy people, teach us how Thou dost invite and urge us to this unity by Thy precious promise given to united prayer. It is when we are one in love and desire that our faith has Thy presence and the Father's answer.

O Father! we pray for Thy people, and for every smaller circle of those who meet together, that they may be one. Remove, we pray, all selfishness and self-interest, all narrowness of heart and estrangement, by which that unity is hindered. Cast out the spirit of the world and the flesh, through which Thy promise loses all its power. O let the though of Thy presence and the Father's favour draw us all nearer to each other.

Grant especially Blessed Lord, that Thy Church may believe that it is by the power of united prayer that she can bind and loose in heaven; that Satan can be cast out; that souls can be saved; that mountains can be removed; that the kingdom can be hastened. And grant, good Lord! that in the circle with which I pray, the prayer of the Church may indeed be the power through which Thy Name and Word are glorified. Amen.

SIXTEENTH LESSON.

'Speedily, though bearing long;'
Or, The Power of Persevering Prayer.

'And He spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint. . . . And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge saith. And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry to Him day and night, and He is long-suffering over them? I say unto you, that He will avenge them speedily.'—Luke xviii. 108.

OF all the mysteries of the prayer world, the need of persevering prayer is one of the greatest. That the Lord, who is so loving and longing to bless, should have to be supplicated time after time, sometimes year after year, before the answer comes, we cannot easily understand. It is also one of the greatest practical difficulties in the exercise of believing prayer. When, after persevering supplication, our prayer remains unanswered, it is often easiest for our slothful flesh, and it has all the appearance of pious submission, to think that we must now cease praying, because God may have His secret reason for withholding His answer to our request.

It is by faith alone that the difficulty is overcome. When once faith has taken its stand upon God's word, and the Name of Jesus, and has yielded itself to the leading of the Spirit to seek God's will and honour alone in its prayer, it need not be discouraged by delay. It knows from Scripture that the power of believing prayer is simply irresistible; real faith can never be disappointed. It knows how, just as water, to exercise the irresistible power it can have, must be gathered up and accumulated, until the stream can come down in full force, there must often be a heaping up of prayer, until God sees that the measure is full, and the answer comes. It knows how, just as the ploughman has to take his ten thousand steps, and sow his ten thousand seeds, each one a part of the preparation for the final harvest, so there is a need-be for oft-repeated persevering prayer, all working out some desired blessing. It knows for certain that not a single believing prayer can fail of its effect in heaven, but has its influence, and is treasured up to work out an answer in due time to him who persevereth to the end. It knows that it has to do not with human thoughts or possibilities, but with the word of the living God. And so even as Abraham through so many years 'in hope believed against hope,' and then 'through faith and patience inherited the promise,' it counts that the long-suffering of the Lord is salvation, waiting and hasting unto the coming of its Lord to fulfil His promise.

To enable us, when the answer to our prayer does not come at once, to combine quiet patience and joyful confidence in our persevering prayer, we must specially try to understand the two words in which our Lord sets forth the character and conduct, not of the unjust judge, but of our God and Father towards those whom He allows to cry day and night to Him: 'He is long-suffering over them; He will avenge them speedily.'

He will avenge them speedily, the Master says. The blessing is all prepared; He is not only willing but most anxious to give them what they ask; everlasting love burns with the longing desire to reveal itself fully to its beloved, and to satisfy their needs. God will not delay one moment longer than is absolutely necessary; He will do all in His power to hasten and speed the answer.

But why, if this be true and His power be infinite, does it often last so long with the answer to prayer? And why must God's own elect so often, in the midst of suffering and conflict, cry day and night? 'He is long-suffering over them.' 'Behold! the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being long-suffering over it, till it receive the early and the latter rain.' The husbandman does indeed long for his harvest, but knows that it must have its full time of sunshine and rain, and has long patience. A child so often wants to pick the half-ripe fruit; the husbandman knows to wait till the proper time. Man, in his spiritual nature too, is under the law of gradual growth that reigns in all created life. It is only in the path of development that he can reach his divine destiny. And it is the Father, in whose hands are the times and seasons, who alone knows the moment when the soul or the Church is ripened to that fulness of faith in which it can really take and keep the blessing. As a father who longs to have his only child home from school, and yet waits patiently till the time of training is completed, so it is with God and His children: He is the long-suffering One, and answers speedily.

The insight into this truth leads the believer to cultivate the corresponding dispositions: patience and faith, waiting and hasting, are the secret of his perseverance. By faith in the promise of God, we know that we have the petitions we have asked of Him. Faith takes and holds the answer in the promise, as an unseen spiritual possession, rejoices in it, and praises for it. But there is a difference

between the faith that thus holds the word and knows that it has the answer, and the clearer, fuller, riper faith that obtains the promise as a present experience. It is in persevering, not unbelieving, but confident and praising prayer, that the soul grows up into that full union with its Lord in which it can enter upon the possession of the blessing in Him. There may be in these around us, there may be in that great system of being of which we are part, there may be in God's government, things that have to be put right through our prayer, ere the answer can fully come: the faith that has, according to the command, believed that it has received, can allow God to take His time: it knows it has prevailed and must prevail. In quiet, persistent, and determined perseverance it continues in prayer and thanksgiving until the blessing come. And so we see combined what at first sight appears so contradictory; the faith that rejoices in the answer of the unseen God as a present possession, with the patience that cries day and night until it be revealed. The speedily of God's long-suffering is met by the triumphant but patient faith of His waiting child.

Our great danger in this school of the answer delayed, is the temptation to think that, after all, it may not be God's will to give us what we ask. If our prayer be according to God's word, and under the leading of the Spirit, let us not give way to these fears. Let us learn to give God time. God needs time with us. If we only give Him time, that is, time in the daily fellowship with Himself, for Him to exercise the full influence of His presence on us, and time, day by day, in the course of our being kept waiting, for faith to prove its reality and to fill our whole being, He Himself will lead us from faith to vision; we shall see the glory of God. Let no delay shake our faith. Of faith it holds good: first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. Each believing prayer brings a step nearer the final victory. Each believing prayer helps to ripen the fruit and bring us nearer to it; it fills up the measure of prayer and faith known to God alone; it conquers the hindrances in the unseen world; it hastens the end. Child of God! give the Father time. He is long-suffering over you. He wants the blessing to be rich, and full, and sure; give Him time, while you cry day and night. Only remember the word: 'I say unto you, He will avenge them speedily.'

The blessing of such persevering prayer is unspeakable. There is nothing so heart-searching as the prayer of faith. It teaches you to discover and confess, and give up everything that hinders the coming of the blessing; everything there may be not in accordance with the Father's will. It leads to closer fellowship with Him who alone can teach to pray, to a more entire surrender to draw nigh under no covering but that of the blood, and the Spirit. It calls to a closer and more simple abiding in Christ alone. Christian! give God time. He will perfect that which concerneth you. 'Long-suffering—speedily,' this is God's watchword as you enter the gates of prayer: be it yours too.

Let it be thus whether you pray for yourself, or for others. All labour, bodily or mental, needs time and effort: we must give up ourselves to it. Nature discovers her secrets and yields her treasures only to diligent and thoughtful labour. However little we can understand it, in the spiritual husbandry it is the same: the seed we sow in the soil of heaven, the efforts we put forth, and the influence we seek to exert in the world above, need our whole being: we must give ourselves to prayer. But let us hold fast the great confidence, that in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

And let us specially learn the lesson as we pray for the Church of Christ. She is indeed as the poor widow, in the absence of her Lord, apparently at the mercy of her adversary, helpless to obtain redress. Let us, when we pray for His Church or any portion of it, under the power of the world, asking Him to visit her with the mighty workings of His Spirit and to prepare her for His coming, let us pray in the assured faith: prayer does help, praying always and not fainting will bring the answer. Only give God time. And then keep crying day and night. 'Hear what the unrighteous judge saith. And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry to Him day and night, and He is long-suffering over them. I say unto you, He will avenge them speedily.'

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

O Lord my God! teach me now to know Thy way, and in faith to apprehend what Thy Beloved Son has taught: 'He will avenge them speedily.' Let Thy tender love, and the delight Thou hast in hearing and blessing Thy children, lead me implicitly to accept Thy promise, that we receive what we believe, that we have the petitions we ask, and that the answer will in due time be seen. Lord! we understand the seasons in nature, and know to wait with patience for the fruit we long for—O fill us with the assurance that not one moment longer than is needed wilt Thou delay, and that faith will hasten the answer.

Blessed Master! Thou hast said that it is a sign of God's elect that they cry day and night. O teach us to understand this. Thou knowest how speedily we grow faint and weary. It is as if the Divine Majesty is so much beyond the need or the reach of continued supplication, that it does not become us to be too importunate. O Lord! do teach me how real the labour of prayer is. I know how here on earth, when I have failed in an undertaking, I can often succeed by renewed and more continuing effort, by giving more time and thought: show me how, by giving myself more entirely to prayer, to live in prayer, I shall obtain what I ask. And above all, O my blessed Teacher! Author and perfecter of faith, let by Thy grace my whole life be one of faith in the Son of God who loved me

and gave Himself for me—in whom my prayer gains acceptance, in whom I have the assurance of the answer, in whom the answer will us! in this faith I will pray always and not faint. Amen.

NOTE

The need of persevering importunate prayer appears to some to be at variance with the faith which knows that it has received what it asks (Mark xi. 24). One of the mysteries of the Divine life is the harmony between the gradual and the sudden, immediate full possession, and slow imperfect appropriation. And so here persevering prayer appears to be the school in which the soul is strengthened for the boldness of faith. And with the diversity of operations of the Spirit there may be some in whom faith takes more the form of persistent waiting; while to others, triumphant thanksgiving appears the only proper expressions of the assurance of having been heard.

In a remarkable way the need of persevering prayer, and the gradual rising into greater ease in obtaining answer, is illustrated in the life of Blumhardt. Complaints had been lodged against him of neglecting his work as a minister of the gospel, and devoting himself to the healing of the sick; and especially his unauthorized healing of the sick belonging to other congregations. In his defense he writes: ‘I simply ventured to do what becomes one who has the charge of souls, and to pray according to the command of the Lord in James i. 6, 7. In no way did I trust to my own power, or imagine that I had any gift that others had not. But this is true, I set myself to the work as a minister of the gospel, who has a right to pray. But I speedily discovered that the gates of heaven were not fully opened to me. Often I was inclined to retire in despair. But the sight of the sick ones, who could find help nowhere, gave me no rest. I thought of the word of the Lord: “Ask, and it shall be given you” (Luke xi. 9, 10). And farther, I thought that if the Church and her ministers had, through unbelief, sloth, and disobedience lost what was needed for overcoming of the power of Satan, it was just for such times of leanness and famine that the Lord had spoken the parable of the friend at midnight and his three loaves. I felt that I was not worthy thus at midnight, in a time of great darkness, to appear before God as His friend and ask for a member of my congregation what he needed. And yet, to leave him uncared for, I could not either. And so I kept knocking, as the parable directs, or, as some have said, with great presumption and tempting God. Be this as it may, I could not leave my guest unprovided. At this time the parable of the widow became very precious to me. I saw that the Church was the widow, and I was a minister of the Church. I had the right to be her mouthpiece against the adversary; but for a long time the Lord would not. I asked nothing more than the three loaves; what I needed for my guest. At last the Lord listened to the importunate beggar, and helped me. Was it wrong of me to pray thus? The two parables must surely be applicable somewhere, and where was greater need to be conceived?

And what was the fruit of my prayer? The friend who was at first unwilling, did not say, Go now; I will myself give to your friend what he needs; I do not require you; but gave it to me as His friend, to give to my guest. And so I used the three loaves, and had to spare. But the supply was small, and new guests came; because they saw I had a heart to help them, and that I would take the trouble even at midnight to go to my friend. When I asked for them, too, I got the needful again, and there was again to spare. How could I help that the needy continually came to my house? Was I to harden myself, and say, What do you come to me? there are large and better homes in the city, go there. Their answer was, Dear sir, we cannot go there. We have been there: they were very sorry to send us away so hungry, but they could not undertake to go and ask a friend for what we wanted. Do go, and get us bread for we suffer great pain. What could I do? They spoke the truth, and their suffering touched my heart. However much labour it cost me, I went each time again, and got the three loaves. Often I got what I asked much quicker than at first, and also much more abundantly. But all did not care for this bread, so some left my home hungry.’[1]

In his first struggles with the evil spirits, it took him more than eighteen months of prayer and labour before the final victory was gained. Afterwards he had such ease of access to the throne, and stood in such close communication with the unseen world, that often, with letters came asking prayer for sick people, he could, after just looking upward for a single moment, obtain the answer as to whether they would be healed.

1 From Johann Christophe Blumhardt, Ein Lebenabild von F. Etindel.

SEVENTEENTH LESSON.

‘I know that Thou hearest me always;’
Or Prayer in harmony with the being of God.

‘Father, I thank Thee that Thou heardest me. And I knew that Thou hearest me always.’—John xi. 41, 42.
‘Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of me, and I shall give Thee.’—Ps. ii. 7, 8.

IN the New Testament we find a distinction made between faith and knowledge. ‘To one is given, through the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; to another faith, in the same Spirit.’ In a child or a simple-minded Christian there may be much faith with little knowledge. Childlike simplicity accepts the truth without difficulty, and often cares little to give itself or others any reason for its faith but this: God has said. But it is the will of God that we should love and serve Him, not only with all the heart but also with all the mind; that we should grow up into an insight into the Divine wisdom and beauty of all His ways and words and works. It is only thus that the believer will be able fully to approach and rightly to adore the glory of God’s grace; and only thus that our heart can intelligently apprehend the treasures of wisdom and knowledge there are in redemption, and be prepared to enter fully into the highest note of the song that rises before the throne: ‘O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!’

In our prayer life this truth has its full application. While prayer and faith are so simple that the new-born convert can pray with power, true Christian science finds in the doctrine of prayer some of its deepest problems. In how far is the power of prayer a reality? If so, how God can grant to prayer such mighty power? How can the action of prayer be harmonized with the will and the decrees of God? How can God’s sovereignty and our will, God’s liberty and ours, be reconciled?—these and other like questions are fit subjects for Christian meditation and inquiry. The more earnestly and reverently we approach such mysteries, the more shall we in adoring wonder fall down to praise Him who hath in prayer given such power to man.

One of the secret difficulties with regard to prayer,—one which, though not expressed, does often really hinder prayer,—is derived from the perfection of God, in His absolute independence of all that is outside of Himself. Is He not the Infinite Being, who owes what He is to Himself alone, who determines Himself, and whose wise and holy will has determined all that is to be? How can prayer influence Him, or He be moved by prayer to do what otherwise would not be done? Is not the promise of an answer to prayer simply a condescension to our weakness? Is what is said of the power—the much-availing power—of prayer anything more than an accommodation to our mode of thought, because the Deity never can be dependent on any action from without for its doings? And is not the blessing of prayer simply the influence it exercises upon ourselves?

In seeking an answer to such questions, we find the key in the very being of God, in the mystery of the Holy Trinity. If God was only one Person, shut up within Himself, there could be no thought of nearness to Him or influence on Him. But in God there are three Persons. In God we have Father and Son, who have in the Holy Spirit their living bond of unity and fellowship. When eternal Love begat the Son, and the Father gave the Son as the Second Person a place next Himself as His Equal and His Counsellor, there was a way opened for prayer and its influence in the very inmost life of Deity itself. Just as on earth, so in heaven the whole relation between Father and Son is that of giving and taking. And if that taking is to be as voluntary and self-determined as the giving, there must be on the part of the Son an asking and receiving. In the holy fellowship of the Divine Persons, this asking of the Son was one of the great operations of the Thrice Blessed Life of God. Hence we have it in Psalm ii.: ‘This day I have begotten Thee: ask of me and I will give Thee.’ The Father gave the Son the place and the power to act upon Him. The asking of the Son was no mere show or shadow, but one of those life-movements in which the love of the Father and the Son met and completed each other. The Father had determined that He should not be alone in His counsels: there was a Son on whose asking and accepting their fulfilment should depend. And so there was in the very Being and Life of God an asking of which prayer on earth was to be the reflection and the outflow. It was not without including this that Jesus said, “I knew that Thou always hearest me.’ Just as the Sonship of Jesus on earth may not be separated from His Sonship in heaven, even so with His prayer on earth, it is the continuation and the counterpart of His asking in heaven. The prayer of the man Christ Jesus is the link between the eternal asking of the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father and the prayer of men upon earth. Prayer has its rise and its deepest source in the very Being of God. In the bosom of Deity nothing is ever done without prayer—the asking of the Son and the giving of the Father.[1]

This may help us somewhat to understand how the prayer of man, coming through the Son, can have effect upon God. The decrees of God are not decisions made by Him without reference to the Son, or His petition, or the petition to be sent up through Him. By no means. The Lord Jesus is the first-begotten, the Head and Heir of all things: all things were created through Him and unto Him, and all things consist in Him. In the counsels of the Father, the Son, as Representative of all creation, had always a voice; in the decrees of the eternal purpose there was always room left for the liberty of the Son as Mediator and Intercessor, and so for the petitions of all who draw nigh to the Father in the Son.

And if the thought come that this liberty and power of the Son to act upon the Father is at variance with the immutability of the Divine decrees, let us not forget that there is not with God as with man, a past by which He is irrevocably bound. God does not live in time with its past and future; the distinctions of time have no reference to Him who inhabits Eternity. And Eternity is an ever-present Now, in which the past is never past, and the future always present. To meet our human weakness, Scripture must speak of past decrees, and a coming future. In reality, the immutability of God's counsel is ever still in perfect harmony with His liberty to do whatsoever He will. Not so were the prayers of the Son and His people taken up into the eternal decrees that their effect should only be an apparent one; but so, that the Father-heart holds itself open and free to listen to every prayer that rises through the Son, and that God does indeed allow Himself to be decided by prayer to do what He otherwise would not have done.

This perfect harmony and union of Divine Sovereignty and human liberty is to us an unfathomable mystery, because God as THE ETERNAL ONE transcends all our thoughts. But let it be our comfort and strength to be assured that in the eternal fellowship of the Father and the Son, the power of prayer has its origin and certainty, and that through our union with the Son, our prayer is taken up and can have its influence in the inner life of the Blessed Trinity. God's decrees are no iron framework against which man's liberty would vainly seek to struggle. No. God Himself is the Living Love, who in His Son as man has entered into the tenderest relation with all that is human, who through the Holy Spirit takes up all that is human into the Divine life of love, and keeps Himself free to give every human prayer its place in His government of the world.

It is in the daybreak light of such thoughts that the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity no longer is an abstract speculation, but the living manifestation of the way in which it were possible for man to be taken up into the fellowship of God, and his prayer to become a real factor in God's rule of this earth. And we can, as in the distance, catch glimpses of the light that from the eternal world shines out on words such as these: 'THROUGH HIM we have access BY ONE SPIRIT unto THE FATHER.'

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

Everlasting God! the Three-One and Thrice Holy! in deep reverence would I with veiled face worship before the holy mystery of Thy Divine Being. And if it please Thee, O most glorious God, to unveil aught of that mystery, I would bow with fear and trembling, lest I sin against Thee, as I meditate on Thy glory.

Father! I thank Thee that Thou bearest this name not only as the Father of Thy children here on earth, but as having from eternity subsisted as the Father with Thine only-begotten Son. I thank Thee that as Father Thou canst hear our prayer, because Thou hast from eternity given a place in Thy counsels to the asking of Thy Son. I thank Thee that we have seen in Him on earth, what the blessed intercourse was He had with Thee in heaven; and how from eternity in all Thy counsels and decrees there had been room left for His prayer and their answers. And I thank Thee above all that through His true human nature on Thy throne above, and through Thy Holy Spirit in our human nature here below, a way has been opened up by which every human cry of need can be taken up into and touch the Life and the Love of God, and receive in answer whatsoever it shall ask.

Blessed Jesus! in whom as the Son the path of prayer has been opened up, and who givest us assurance of the answer, we beseech Thee, teach Thy people to pray. O let this each day be the sign of our sonship, that, like Thee, we know that the Father heareth us always. Amen.

NOTE.

‘”God hears prayer.” This simplest view of prayer is taken throughout Scripture. It dwells not on the reflex influence of prayer on our heart and life, although it abundantly shows the connection between prayer as an act, and prayer as a state. It rather fixes with great definiteness the objective or real purposes of prayer, to obtain blessing, gifts, deliverances from God. ‘Ask and it shall be given,” Jesus says.

‘However true and valuable the reflection may be, that God, foreseeing and foreordaining all things, has also foreseen and foreordained our prayers as links in the chain of events, of cause and effect, as a real power, yet we feel convinced that this is not the light in which the mind can find peace in this great subject, nor do we think that here is the attractive power to draw us in prayer. We feel rather that such a reflection diverts the attention from the Objecimpulse, life, and strength of prayer. The living God, cotemporary and not merely eternal,1 the living, merciful, holy One, God manifesting Himself to the soul, God saying, “Seek my face;” this is the magnet that draws us, this alone can open heart and lips. . .

‘In Jesus Christ the Son of God we have the full solution of the difficulty. He prayed on earth, and that not merely as man, but as the Son of God incarnate. His prayer on earth is only the manifestation of His prayer from all eternity, when in the Divine counsel He was set up as the Christ. . . . The Son was appointed to be heir of all things. From all eternity the Son of God was the Way, the Mediator. He was, to use our imperfect language, from eternity speaking unto the Father on behalf of the world.’—SAPHIR, The Hidden Life, chap. vi. See also The Lord’s Prayer, p. 12.

1 Should it not rather be cotemporary, because eternal, in the proper meaning of this latter word?

EIGHTEENTH LESSON.

'Whose is this image?'
Or, Prayer in Harmony with the Destiny of Man.

'He saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?—Matt. xxi. 20.
'And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.'—Gen. i. 26.

WHOSE is this image?' It was by this question that Jesus foiled His enemies, when they thought to take Him, and settled the matter of duty in regard to the tribute. The question and the principle it involves are of universal application. Nowhere more truly than in man himself. The image he bears decides his destiny. Bearing God's image, he belongs to God: prayer to God is what he was created for. Prayer is part of the wondrous likeness he bears to His Divine original; of the deep mystery of the fellowship of love in which the Three-One has His blessedness, prayer is the earthly image and likeness.

The more we meditate on what prayer is, and the wonderful power with God which it has, the more we feel constrained to ask who and what man is, that such a place in God's counsels should have been allotted to him. Sin has so degraded him, that from what he is now we can form no conception of what he was meant to be. We must turn back to God's own record of man's creation to discover there what God's purpose was, and what the capacities with which man was endowed for the fulfilment of that purpose.

Man's destiny appears clearly from God's language at creation. It was to fill, to subdue, to have dominion over the earth and all in it. All the three expressions show us that man was meant, as God's representative, to hold rule here on earth. As God's viceroy he was to fill God's place: himself subject to God, he was to keep all else in subjection to Him. It was the will of God that all that was to be done on earth should be done through him: the history of the earth was to be entirely in his hands.

In accordance with such a destiny was the position he was to occupy, and the power at his disposal. When an earthly sovereign sends a viceroy to a distant province, it is understood that he advises as to the policy to be adopted, and that that advice is acted on: that he is at liberty to apply for troops and the other means needed for carrying out the policy or maintaining the dignity of the empire. If his policy be not approved of, he is recalled to make way for some one who better understands his sovereign's desires' as long as he is trusted, his advice is carried out. As God's representative man was to have ruled; all was to have been done under his will and rule; on his advice and at his request heaven was to have bestowed its blessing on earth. His prayer was to have been the wonderful, though simple and most natural channel, in which the intercourse between the King in heaven and His faithful servant man, as lord of this world, was to have been maintained. The destinies of the world were given into the power of the wishes, the will, the prayer of man.

With sin all this underwent a terrible change—man's fall brought all creation under the curse. With redemption the beginning was seen of a glorious restoration. No sooner had God begun in Abraham to form for Himself a people from whom kings, yea the Great King, should come forth, than we see what power the prayer of God's faithful servant has to decide the destinies of those who come into contact with him. In Abraham we see how prayer is not only, or even chiefly, the means of obtaining blessing for ourselves, but is the exercise of his royal prerogative to influence the destinies of men, and the will of God which rules them. We do not once find Abraham praying for himself. His prayer for Sodom and Lot, for Abimelech, for Ishmael, prove what power a man, who is God's friend, has to make the history of those around him.

This had been man's destiny from the first. Scripture not only tells us this, but also teaches us how it was that God could entrust man with such a high calling. It was because He had created him in His own image and likeness. The external rule was not committed to him without the inner fitness: the bearing God's image in having dominion, in being lord of all, had its root in the inner likeness, in his nature. There was an inner agreement and harmony between God and man, and incipient Godlikeness, which gave man a real fitness for being the mediator between God and His world, for he was to be prophet, priest, and king, to interpret God's will, to represent nature's needs, to receive and dispense God's bounty. It was in bearing God's image that he could bear God's rule; he was indeed so like God, so capable of entering into God's purposes, and carrying out His plans, that God could trust him with the wonderful privilege of asking and obtaining what the world might need. And although sin has for a time frustrated God's plans, prayer still remains what it would have been if man had never fallen: the proof of man's Godlikeness, the vehicle of his intercourse with the Infinite Unseen One, the power that is allowed to hold the hand that holds the destinies of the universe. Prayer is not merely

the cry of the suppliant for mercy; it is the highest forth-putting of his will by man, knowing himself to be of Divine origin, created for and capable of being, in king-like liberty, the executor of the counsels of the Eternal.

What sin destroyed, grace has restored. What the first Adam lost, the second has won back. In Christ man regains his original position, and the Church, abiding in Christ, inherits the promise: 'Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' Such a promise does by no means, in the first place, refer to the grace or blessing we need for ourselves. It has reference to our position as the fruit-bearing branches of the Heavenly Vine, who, like Him, only live for the work and glory of the Father. It is for those who abide in Him, who have forsaken self to take up their abode in Him with His life of obedience and self-sacrifice, who have lost their life and found it in Him, who are now entirely given up to the interests of the Father and His kingdom. These are they who understand how their new creation has brought them back to their original destiny, has restored God's image and likeness, and with it the power to have dominion. Such have indeed the power, each in their own circle, to obtain and dispense the powers of heaven here on earth. With holy boldness they may make known what they will: they live as priests in God's presence; as kings the powers of the world to come begin to be at their disposal. 1 They enter upon the fulfilment of the promise: 'Ask whatsoever ye will, it shall be done unto you.'

Church of the living God! thy calling is higher and holier than thou knowest. Through thy members, as kings, and priests unto God, would God rule the world; their prayers bestow and withhold the blessing of heaven. In His elect who are not just content to be themselves saved, but yield themselves wholly, that through them, even as through the Son, the Father may fulfil all His glorious counsel, in these His elect, who cry day and night unto Him, God would prove how wonderful man's original destiny was. As the image-bearer of God on earth, the earth was indeed given into his hand. When he fell, all fell with him: the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together. But now he is redeemed; the restoration of the original dignity has begun. It is in very deed God's purpose that the fulfilment of His eternal purpose, and the coming of His kingdom, should depend on those of His people who, abiding in Christ, are ready to take up their position in Him their Head, the great Priest-King, and in their prayers are bold enough to say what they will that their God should do. As image-bearer and representative of God on earth, redeemed man has by his prayers to determine the history of this earth. Man was created, and has now again been redeemed, to pray, and by his prayer to have dominion.

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

Lord! what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? for Thou has made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the work of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things under his feet. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!

Lord God! how low has sin made man to sink. And how terribly has it darkened his mind, that he does not even know his Divine destiny, to be Thy servant and representative. Alas! that even Thy people, when their eyes are opened, are so little ready to accept their calling and to seek to have power with God, that they may have power with men too to bless them.

Lord Jesus! it is in Thee the Father hath again crowned man with glory and honour, and opened the way for us to be what He would have us. O Lord, have mercy on Thy people, and visit Thine heritage! Work mightily in Thy Church, and teach Thy believing disciples to go forth in their royal priesthood, and in the power of prayer, to which Thou hast given such wonderful promises, to serve Thy kingdom, to have rule over the nations, and make the name of God glorious in the earth. Amen.

1 'God is seeking priests among the sons of men. A human priesthood is one of the essential parts of His eternal plan. To rule creation by man is His design; to carry on the worship of creation by man is no less part of His design. 'Priesthood is the appointed link between heaven and earth, the channel of intercourse between the sinner and God. Such a priesthood, in so far as expiation is concerned, is in the hands of the Son of God alone; in so far as it is to be the medium of communication between Creator and creature, is also in the hands of redeemed men—of the Church of God. 'God is seeking kings. Not out of the ranks of angels. Fallen man must furnish Him with the rulers of His universe. Human hands must wield the sceptre, human heads must wear the crown.—The Rent Veil, by Dr. H. Bonar.

NINTEENTH LESSON.

‘I go unto the Father!’
Or, Power for Praying and Working.

‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do.’—John xiv. 12, 13.

AS the Saviour opened His public ministry with His disciples by the Sermon on the Mount, so He closes it by the Parting Address preserved to us by John. In both He speaks more than once of prayer. But with a difference. In the Sermon on the Mount it is as to disciples who have only just entered His school, who scarcely know that God is their Father, and whose prayer chiefly has reference to their personal needs. In His closing address He speaks to disciples whose training time is now come to an end, and who are ready as His messengers to take His place and His work. In the former the chief lesson is: Be childlike, pray believingly, and trust the Father that He will give you all good gifts. Here He points to something higher: They are now His friends to whom He has made known all that He has heard of the Father; His messengers, who have entered into His plans, and into whose hands the care of His work and kingdom on earth is to be entrusted. They are now to go out and do His works, and in the power of His approaching exaltation, even greater works: prayer is now to be the channel through which that power is to be received for their work. With Christ’s ascension to the Father a new epoch commences for their working and praying both.

See how clearly this connection comes out in our text. As His body here on earth, as those who are one with Him in heaven, they are now to do greater works than He had done; their success and their victories are to be greater than His. He mentions two reasons for this. The one, because He was to go to the Father, to receive all power; the other, because they might now ask and expect all in His Name. ‘Because I go to the Father, and—notice this and—and, whatsoever ye shall ask, I will do.’ His going to the Father would thus bring the double blessing: they would ask and receive all in His Name, and as a consequence, would do the greater works. This first mention of prayer in our Saviour’s parting words thus teaches us two most important lessons. He that would do the works of Jesus must pray in His Name. He that would pray in His Name must work in His Name.

He who would work must pray: it is in prayer that the power for work is obtained. He that in faith would do the works that Jesus did, must pray in His Name. As long as Jesus was here on earth, He Himself did the greatest works: devils the disciples could not cast out, fled at His word. When He went to the Father, He was no longer here in the body to work directly. The disciples were now His body: all His work from the throne in heaven here on earth must and could be done through them. One might have thought that now He was leaving the scene Himself, and could only work through commissioners, the works might be fewer and weaker. He assures us of the contrary: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and he shall do greater works.’ His approaching death was to be such a real breaking down and making an end of the power of sin; with the resurrection the powers of the Eternal Life were so truly to take possession of the human body and to obtain supremacy over human life; with His ascension He was to receive the power to communicate the Holy Spirit so fully to His own; the union, the oneness between Himself on the throne and them on earth, was to be so intensely and divinely perfect, that He meant it as the literal truth: ‘Greater works than these shall he do, because I go to the Father.’ And the issue proved how true it was. While Jesus, during three years of personal labour on earth, gathered little more than five hundred disciples, and the most of them so feeble that they were but little credit to His cause, it was given to men like Peter and Paul manifestly to do greater things than He had done. From the throne He could do through them what He Himself in His humiliation could not yet do.

But there is one condition: ‘He that believeth on me, he shall do greater works, because I go to the Father; and whatsover ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do.’ His going to the Father would give Him a new power to hear prayer. For the doing of the greater works, two things were needed: His going to the Father to receive all power, our prayer in His Name to receive all power from Him again. As He asks the Father, He receives and bestows on us the power of the new dispensation for the greater works; as we believe, and ask in His Name, the power comes and takes possession of us to do the greater works.

Alas! how much working there is in the work of God, in which there is little or nothing to be seen of the power to do anything like Christ’s works, not to speak of greater works. There can be but one reason: the believing on Him, the believing prayer in His Name, this is so much wanting. O that every labourer and leader in church, or school, in the work of home philanthropy or foreign missions might learn the lesson: Prayer in the Name of Jesus is the way to share in the mighty power which Jesus has received of the Father

for His people, and it is in this power alone that he that believeth can do the greater works. To every complaint as to weakness or unfitness, as to difficulties or want of success, Jesus gives this one answer: ‘He that believeth on me shall do greater works, because I go to the Father, and whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do.’ We must understand that the first and chief thing for everyone who would do the work of Jesus, is to believe, and so to get linked to Him, the Almighty One, and then to pray the prayer of faith in His Name. Without this our work is but human and carnal; it may have some use in restraining sin, or preparing the way for blessing, but the real power is wanting. Effectual working needs first effectual prayer.

And now the second lesson: He who would pray must work. It is for power to work that prayer has such great promises: it is in working that the power for the effectual prayer of faith will be gained. In these parting words of our blessed Lord we find that He no less than six times (John xiv. 13, 14, xv. 7, 16, xvi. 23, 24) repeats those unlimited prayer-promises which have so often awakened our anxious questionings as to their real meaning: ‘whatsoever,’ ‘anything,’ ‘what ye will,’ ‘ask and ye shall receive.’ How many a believer has read these over with joy and hope, and in deep earnestness of soul has sought to plead them for his own need. And he has come out disappointed. The simple reason was this: he had rent away the promise from its surrounding. The Lord gave the wonderful promise of the free use of His Name with the Father in connection with the doing of His works. It is the disciple who gives himself wholly to live for Jesus’ work and kingdom, for His will and honour, to whom the power will come to appropriate the promise. He that would fain grasp the promise when he wants something very special for himself, will be disappointed, because he would make Jesus the servant of his own comfort. But to him who seeks to pray the effectual prayer of faith, because he needs it for the work of the Master, to him it will be given to learn it; because he has made himself the servant of his Lord’s interests. Prayer not only teaches and strengthens to work: work teaches and strengthens to pray.

This is in perfect harmony with what holds good both in the natural and the spiritual world. Whosoever hath, to him shall be given; or, He that is faithful in a little, is faithful also in much. Let us with the small measure of grace already received, give ourselves to the Master for His work: work will be to us a real school of prayer. It was when Moses had to take full charge of a rebellious people that he felt the need, but also the courage, to speak boldly to God and to ask great things of Him (Ex. xxxiii. 12, 15, 18). As you give yourself entirely to God for His work, you will feel that nothing less than these great promises are what you need, that nothing less is what you may most confidently expect.

Believer in Jesus! You are called, you are appointed, to do the works of Jesus, and even greater works, because He has gone to the Father to receive the power to do them in and through you.

Whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do. Give yourself, and live, to do the works of Christ and you will learn to pray so as to obtain wonderful answers to prayer. Give yourself, and live, to pray and you will learn to do the works He did, and greater works. With disciples full of faith in Himself, and bold in prayer to ask great things, Christ can conquer the world.

‘LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

O my Lord! I have this day again heard words from Thee which pass my comprehension. And yet I cannot do aught but in simple childlike faith take and keep them as Thy gift to me too. Thou hast said that in virtue of Thy going to the Father, he that believeth on Thee will do the works which Thou hast done, and greater works. Lord! I worship Thee as the Glorified One, and look for the fulfilment of Thy promise. May my whole life just be one of continued believing in Thee. So purify and sanctify my heart, make it so tenderly susceptible of Thyself and Thy love, that believing on Thee may be the very life it breathes.

And Thou hast said that in virtue of Thy going to the Father, whatsoever we ask, Thou wilt do. From Thy throne of power Thou wouldest make Thy people share the power given Thee, and work through them as the members of Thy body, in response to their believing prayers in Thy Name. Power in prayer with Thee, and power in work with men, is what Thou has promised Thy people and me too.

Blessed Lord! Forgive us all that we have so little believed Thee and Thy promise, and so little proved Thy faithfulness in fulfilling it. O forgive us that we have so little honoured Thy all-prevailing Name in heaven or upon earth.

Lord! Teach me to pray so that I may prove that Thy Name is indeed all-prevailing with God and men and devils. Yea, teach me so to work and so to pray that Thou canst glorify Thyself in me as the Omnipotent One, and do Thy great work through me too. Amen.

TWENTIETH LESSON.

'That the Father may be glorified;'
Or, The Chief End of Prayer.

I go unto the Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.'—John xiv. 13.

THAT the Father may be glorified in the Son: it is to this end that Jesus on His throne in glory will do all we ask in His Name. Every answer to prayer He gives will have this as its object: when there is no prospect of this object being obtained, He will not answer. It follows as a matter of course that this must be with us, as with Jesus, the essential element in our petitions: the glory of the Father must be the aim and end, the very soul and life of our prayer.

It was so with Jesus when He was on earth. 'I seek not mine own honour: I seek the honour of Him that sent me;' in such words we have the keynote of His life. In the first words of the high-priestly prayer He gives utterance to it: Father! Glorify Thy son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee. 'I have glorified Thee on earth; glorify me with Thyself.' The ground on which He asks to be taken up into the glory He had with the Father, is the twofold one: He has glorified Him on earth; He will still glorify Him in heaven. What He asks is only to enable Him to glorify the Father more. It is as we enter into sympathy with Jesus on this point, and gratify Him by making the Father's glory our chief object in prayer too, that our prayer cannot fail of an answer. There is nothing of which the Beloved Son has said more distinctly that it will glorify the Father than this, His doing what we ask; He will not, therefore, let any opportunity slip of securing this object. Let us make His aim ours: let the glory of the Father be the link between our asking and His doing: such prayer must prevail.[1]

This word of Jesus comes indeed as a sharp two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. Jesus in His prayers on earth, in His intercession in heaven, in His promise of an answer to our prayers from there, makes this His first object—the glory of His Father. Is it so with us too? Or are not, in large measure, self-interest and self-will the strongest motives urging us to pray? Or, if we cannot see that this is the case, have we not to acknowledge that the distinct, conscious longing for the glory of the Father is not what animates our prayers? And yet it must be so.

Not as if the believer does not at times desire it. But he has to mourn that he has so little attained. And he knows the reason of his failure too. It was, because the separation between the spirit of daily life and the spirit of the hour of prayer was too wide. We begin to see that the desire for the glory of the Father is not something that we can awake and present to our Lord when we prepare ourselves to pray. No! it is only when the whole life, in all its parts, is given up to God's glory, that we can really pray to His glory too. 'Do all to the glory of God,' and, 'Ask all to the glory of God,'—these twin commands are inseparable: obedience to the former is the secret of grace for the latter. A life to the glory of God is the condition of the prayers that Jesus can answer, 'that the Father may be glorified.'

This demand in connection with prevailing prayer—that it should be to the glory of God—is no more than right and natural. There is none glorious but the Lord: there is no glory but His, and what He layeth on His creatures. Creation exists to show forth His glory; all that is not for His glory is sin, and darkness, and death: it is only in the glorifying of God that the creatures can find glory. What the Son of Man did, to give Himself wholly, His whole life, to glorify the Father, is nothing but the simple duty of every redeemed one. And Christ's reward will be his too. Because He gave Himself so entirely to the glory of the Father, the Father crowned Him with glory and honour, giving the kingdom into His hands, with the power to ask what He will, and, as Intercessor, to answer our prayers. And just as we become one with Christ in this, and as our prayer is part of a life utterly surrendered to God's glory, will the Saviour be able to glorify the Father to us by the fulfilment of the promise: 'Whatsoever ye shall ask, I will do it.'

To such a life, with God's glory our only aim, we cannot attain by any effort of our own. It is only in the man Christ Jesus that such a life is to be seen: in Him it is to be found for us. Yes blessed be God! His life is our life; He gave Himself for us; He Himself is now our life. The discovery, and the confession, and the denial, of self, as usurping the place of God, of self-seeking and self-trusting, is essential, and yet is what we cannot accomplish in our own strength. It is the incoming and indwelling, the Presence and the Rule in the heart, of our Lord Jesus who glorified the Father on earth, and is now glorified with Him, that thence He might glorify Him in us;—it is Jesus Himself coming in, who can cast out all self-glorifying, and give us instead His own God-glorifying life and Spirit. It is Jesus, who longs to glorify the Father in hearing our prayers, who will teach us to live and to pray to the glory of God.

And what motive, what power is there that can urge our slothful hearts to yield themselves to our Lord to work this in us? Surely nothing more is needed than a sight of how glorious, how alone worthy of glory the Father is. Let our faith learn in adoring worship to bow before Him, to ascribe to Him alone the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, to yield ourselves to dwell in His light as the ever-blessed, ever-loving One. Surely we shall be stirred to say, 'To Him alone be glory.' And we shall look to our Lord Jesus with new intensity of desire for a life that refuses to see or seek ought but the glory of God. When there is but little prayer that can be answered, the Father is not glorified. It is a duty, for the glory of God, to live and pray so that our prayer can be answered. For the sake of God's glory, let us learn to pray well.

What a humbling thought that so often there is earnest prayer for a child or a friend, for a work or a circle, in which the thought of our joy or our pleasure was far stronger than any yearnings for God's glory. No wonder that there are so many unanswered prayers: here we have the secret. God would not be glorified when that glory was not our object. He that would pray the prayer of faith, will have to give himself to live literally so that the Father in all things may be glorified in him. This must be his aim: without this there cannot be the prayer of faith. 'How can ye believe,' said Jesus, 'which receive glory of one another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not?' All seeking of our own glory with men makes faith impossible: it is the deep, intense self-sacrifice that gives up its own glory, and seeks the glory of God alone, that wakens in the soul that spiritual susceptibility of the Divine, which is faith. The surrender to God to seek His glory, and the expectation that He will show His glory in hearing us, are one at root: He that seeks God's glory will see it in the answer to his prayer, and he alone.

And how, we ask again, shall we attain to it? Let us begin with confession. How little has the glory of God been an all-absorbing passion; how little our lives and our prayers have been full of it. How little have we lived in the likeness of the Son, and in sympathy with Him—for God and His glory alone. Let us take time, until the Holy Spirit discover it to us, and we see how wanting we have been in this. True knowledge and confession of sin are the sure path to deliverance.

And then let us look to Jesus. In Him we can see by what death we can glorify God. In death He glorified Him; through death He was glorified with Him. It is by dying, being dead to self and living to God, that we can glorify Him. And this—this death to self, this life to the glory of God—is what Jesus gives and lives in each one who can trust Him for it. Let nothing less than these—the desire, the decision to live only for the glory of the Father, even as Christ did; the acceptance of Him with His life and strength working it in us; the joyful assurance that we can live to the glory of God, because Christ lives in us;—let this be the spirit of our daily life. Jesus stands surety for our living thus; the Holy Spirit is given, and waiting to make it our experience, if we will only trust and let Him; O let us not hold back through unbelief, but confidently take as our watchword—All to the glory of God! The Father accepts the will, the sacrifice is well-pleasing; the Holy Spirit will seal us within with the consciousness, we are living for God and His glory.

And then what quiet peace and power there will be in our prayers, as we know ourselves through His grace, in perfect harmony with Him who says to us, when He promises to do what we ask: 'That the Father may be glorified in the Son.' With our whole being consciously yielded to the inspiration of the Word and Spirit, our desires will be no longer ours but His; their chief end the glory of God. With increasing liberty we shall be able in prayer to say: Father! Thou knowest, we ask it only for Thy glory. And the condition of prayer-answers, instead of being as a mountain we cannot climb, will only give us the greater confidence that we shall be heard, because we have seen that prayer has no higher beauty or blessedness than this, that it glorifies the Father. And the precious privilege of prayer will become doubly precious because it brings us into perfect unison with the Beloved Son in the wonderful partnership He proposes: 'You ask, and I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.'

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

Blessed Lord Jesus! I come again to Thee. Every lesson Thou givest me convinces me more deeply how little I know to pray aright. But every lesson also inspires me with hope that Thou art going to teach me, that Thou art teaching me not only to know what prayer should be, but actually to pray as I ought. O my Lord! I look with courage to Thee, the Great Intercessor, who didst pray and dost hear prayer, only that the Father may be glorified, to teach me too to live and to pray to the glory of God.

Saviour! To this end I yield myself to Thee again. I would be nothing. I have given self, as already crucified with Thee, to the death. Through the Spirit its workings are mortified and made dead; Thy life and Thy love of the Father are taking possession of me. A new longing begins to fill my soul, that every day, every hour, that in every prayer the glory of the Father may be everything to me. O my Lord! I am in Thy school to learn this: teach Thou it me.

And do Thou, the God of glory, the Father of glory, my God and my Father, f a child who has seen that Thy glory is indeed alone worth living for. O Lord! Show me Thy glory. Let it overshadow me. Let it fill the temple of my heart. Let me dwell in it as revealed in Christ. And do Thou Thyself fulfil in me Thine own good pleasure, that Thy child should find his glory in seeking the glory of his Father. Amen.

1 See in the note on George Muller, at the close of this volume, how he was led to make God's glory his first object.

TWENTY-FIRST LESSON.

‘If ye abide in me;’
Or The All-Inclusive Condition.

‘If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.’—John xv. 7.

IN all God’s intercourse with us, the promise and its conditions are inseparable. If we fulfil the conditions, He fulfils the promise. What He is to be to us depends upon what we are willing to be to Him. ‘Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.’ And so in prayer the unlimited promise, Ask whatsoever ye will, has its one simple and natural condition, if ye abide in me. It is Christ whom the Father always hears; God is in Christ, and can only be reached by being in Him; to be IN HIM is the way to have our prayer heard; fully and wholly ABIDING IN HIM, we have the right to ask whatsoever we will, and the promise that it shall be done unto us.

When we compare this promise with the experiences of most believers, we are startled by a terrible discrepancy. Who can number up the countless prayers that rise and bring no answer? The cause must be either that we do not fulfil the condition, or God does not fulfil the promise. Believers are not willing to admit either, and therefore have devised a way of escape from the dilemma. They put into the promise the qualifying clause our Saviour did not put there—if it be God’s will; and so maintain both God’s integrity and their own. O if they did but accept it and hold it fast as it stands, trusting to Christ to vindicate His truth, how God’s Spirit would lead them to see the Divine propriety of such a promise to those who really abide in Christ in the sense in which He means it, and to confess that the failure in the fulfilling the condition is the one sufficient explanation of unanswered prayer. And how the Holy Spirit would then make our feebleness in prayer one of the mightiest motives to urge us on to discover the secret, and obtain the blessing, of full abiding in Christ.

‘If ye abide in me.’ As a Christian grows in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, he is often surprised to find how the words of God grow too, in the new and deeper meaning with which they come to him. He can look back to the day when some word of God was opened up to him and he rejoiced in the blessing he had found in it. After a time some deeper experience gave it a new meaning, and it was as if he never had seen what it contained. And yet once again, as he advanced in the Christian life, the same word stood before him again as a great mystery, until anew the Holy Spirit led him still deeper into its Divine fulness. One of these ever-growing, never-exhausted words, opening up to us step by step the fulness of the Divine life, is the Master’s precious ‘Abide in me.’ As the union of the branch with the vine is one of growth, never-ceasing growth and increase, so our abiding in Christ is a life process in which the Divine life takes ever fuller and more complete possession of us. The young and feeble believer may be really abiding in Christ up to the measure of his light; it is he who reaches onward to the full abiding in the sense in which the Master understood the words, who inherits all the promises connected with it.

In the growing life of abiding in Christ, the first stage is that of faith. As the believer sees that, with all his feebleness, the command is really meant for him, his great aim is simply to believe that, as he knows he is in Christ, so now, notwithstanding unfaithfulness and failure, abiding in Christ is his immediate duty, and a blessing within his reach. He is specially occupied with the love, and power, and faithfulness of the Saviour: he feels his one need to be believing.

It is not long before he sees something more is needed. Obedience and faith must go together. Not as if to the faith he has the obedience must be added, but faith must be made manifest in obedience. Faith is obedience at home and looking to the Master: obedience is faith going out to do His will. He sees how he has been more occupied with the privilege and the blessings of this abiding than with its duties and its fruit. There has been much of self and of self-will that has been unnoticed or tolerated: the peace which, as a young and feeble disciple, he could enjoy in believing goes from him; it is in practical obedience that the abiding must be maintained: ‘If ye keep my commands, ye shall abide in my love.’ As before his great aim was through the mind, and the truth it took hold of, to let the heart rest on Christ and His promises; so now, in this stage, he chief effort is to get his will united with the will of his Lord, and the heart and the life brought entirely under His rule.

And yet it is as if there is something wanting. The will and the heart are on Christ’s side; he obeys and he loves his Lord. But still, why is it that the fleshly nature has yet so much power, that the spontaneous motions and emotions of the inmost being are not what they should be? The will does not approve or allow, but here is a region beyond control of the will. And why also, even when there is not so much of positive commission to condemn, why so much of omission, the deficiency of that beauty of holiness, that zeal of

love, that conformity to Jesus and His death, in which the life of self is lost, and which is surely implied in the abiding, as the Master meant it? There must surely be something in our abiding in Christ and Christ in us, which he has not yet experienced.

It is so. Faith and obedience are but the pathway of blessing. Before giving us the parable of the vine and the branches, Jesus had very distinctly told what the full blessing is to which faith and obedience are to lead. Three times over He had said, ‘If ye love me, keep my commandments,’ and spoken of the threefold blessing with which He would crown such obedient love. The Holy Spirit would come from the Father; the Son would manifest Himself; the Father and the Son would come and make their abode. It is as our faith grows into obedience, and in obedience and love our whole being goes out and clings itself to Christ, that our inner life becomes opened up, and the capacity is formed within of receiving the life, the spirit, of the glorified Jesus, as a distinct and conscious union with Christ and with the Father. The word is fulfilled in us: ‘In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father and ye in me, and I in you.’ We understand how, just as Christ is in God, and God in Christ, one together not only in will and in love, but in identity of nature and life, because they exist in each other, so we are in Christ and Christ in us, in union not only of will and love, but of life and nature too.

It was after Jesus had spoken of our thus through the Holy Spirit knowing that He is in the Father, and even so we in Him and He in us, that He said, ‘Abide in me, and I in you. Accept, consent to receive that Divine life of union with myself, in virtue of which, as you abide in me, I also abide in you, even as I abide in the Father. So that your life is mine and mine is yours.’ This is the true abiding, the occupying of the position in which Christ can come and abide; so abiding in Him that the soul has come away from self to find that He has taken the place and become our life. It is the becoming as little children who have no care, and find their happiness in trusting and obeying the love that has done all for them.

To those who thus abide, the promise comes as their rightful heritage: Ask whatsoever ye will. It cannot be otherwise. Christ has got full possession of Them. Christ dwells in their love, their will, their life. Not only has their will been given up; Christ has entered it, and dwells and breathes in it by His Spirit. He whom the Father always hears, prays in them; they pray in Him: what they ask shall be done unto them.

Beloved fellow-believer! let us confess that it is because we do not abide in Christ as He would have us, that the Church is so impotent in presence of the infidelity and worldliness and heathendom, in the midst of which the Lord is able to make her more than conqueror. Let us believe that He means what He promises, and accept the condemnation the confession implies.

But let us not be discouraged. The abiding of the branch in the Vine is a life of never-ceasing growth. The abiding, as the Master meant it, is within our reach, for He lives to give it us. Let us but be ready to count all things loss, and to say, ‘Not as though I had already attained; I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I also am apprehended of Christ Jesus.’ Let us not be so much occupied with the abiding, as with Him to whom the abiding links us, and His fulness. Let it be Him, the whole Christ, in His obedience and humiliation, in His exaltation and power, in whom our soul moves and acts; He Himself will fulfil His promise in us.

And then as we abide, and grow evermore into the full abiding, let us exercise our right, the will to enter into all God’s will. Obeying what that will commands, let us claim what it promises. Let us yield to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, to show each of us, according to his growth and measure, what the will of God is which we may claim in prayer. And let us rest content with nothing less than the personal experience of what Jesus gave when He said, ‘If ye abide in me, ask whatsoever ye will, it shall be done unto you.’

‘LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY!’

Beloved Lord! do teach me to take this promise anew in all its simplicity, and to be sure that the only measure of Thy holy giving is our holy willing. Lord! Let each word of this Thy promise be anew made quick and powerful in my soul.

Thou sayest: Abide in me! O my Master, my Life, my All, I do abide in Thee. Give Thou me to grow up into all Thy fulness. It is not the effort of faith, seeking to cling to Thee, nor even the rest of faith, trusting Thee to keep me; it is not the obedience of the will, nor the keeping the commandments; but it is Thyself living in me and in the Father, that alone can satisfy me. It is Thy self, my Lord, no longer before me and above me, but one with me, and abiding in me; it is this I need, it is this I seek. It is this I trust Thee for.

Thou sayest: Ask whatsoever ye will! Lord! I know that the life of full, deep abiding will so renew and sanctify and strengthen the will that I shall have the light and the liberty to ask great things. Lord! let my will, dead in Thy death, living in Thy life, be bold and large in its petitions.

Thou sayest: It shall be done. O Thou who art the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, give me in Thyself the joyous confidence that Thou wilt make this word yet more wonderfully true to me than ever, because it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared for them that love Him. Amen.

NOTE

On a thoughtful comparison of what we mostly find in books or sermons on prayer, and the teaching of the Master, we shall find one great difference: the importance assigned to the answer to prayer is by no means the same. In the former we find a great deal on the blessing of prayer as a spiritual exercise even if there be no answer, and on the reasons why we should be content without it. God's fellowship ought to be more to us than the gift we ask; God's wisdom only knows what is best; God may bestow something better than what He withholds. Though this teaching looks very high and spiritual, it is remarkable that we find nothing of it with our Lord. The more carefully we gather together all He spoke on prayer, the clearer it becomes that He wished us to think of prayer simply as the means to an end, and that the answer was to be the proof that we and our prayer are acceptable to the Father in heaven. It is not that Christ would have us count the gifts of higher value than the fellowship and favour of the Father. By no means. But the Father means the answer to be the token of His favour and of the reality of our fellowship with Him. 'To-day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant.'

A life marked by daily answer to prayer is the proof of our spiritual maturity; that we have indeed attained to the true abiding in Christ; that our will is truly at one with God's will; that our faith has grown strong to see and take what God has prepared for us; that the Name of Christ and His nature have taken full possession of us; and that we have been found fit to take a place among those whom God admits to His counsels, and according to whose prayer He rules the world. These are they in whom something of man's original dignity hath been restored, in whom, as they abide in Christ, His power as the all-prevailing Intercessor can manifest itself, in whom the glory of His Name is shown forth. Prayer is very blessed; the answer is more blessed still, as the response from the Father that our prayer, our faith, our will are indeed as He would wish them to be.

I make these remarks with the one desire of leading my readers themselves to put together all that Christ has said on prayer, and to yield themselves to the full impression of the truth that when prayer is what it should be, or rather when we are what we should be, abiding in Christ, the answer must be expected. It will bring us out from those refuges where we have comforted ourselves with unanswered prayer. It will discover to us the place of power to which Christ has appointed His Church, and which it so little occupies. It will reveal the terrible feebleness of our spiritual life as the cause of our not knowing to pray boldly in Christ's Name. It will urge us mightily to rise to a life in the full union with Christ, and in the fulness of the Spirit, as the secret of effectual prayer. And it will so lead us on to realize our destiny: 'At that day: Verily, verily, I say unto you, If ye shall ask anything of the Father, He will give it you in my Name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be fulfilled.' Prayer that is really, spiritually, in union with Jesus, is always answered.

TWENTY-SECOND LESSON.

‘My words in you.’
Or, The Word and Prayer.

‘If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.’—John xv. 7.

THE vital connection between the word and prayer is one of the simplest and earliest lessons of the Christian life. As that newly-converted heathen put it: I pray—I speak to my father; I read—my Father speaks to me. Before prayer, it is God’s word that prepares me for it by revealing what the Father has bid me ask. In prayer, it is God’s word strengthens me by giving my faith its warrant and its plea. And after prayer, it is God’s word that brings me the answer when I have prayed, for in it the Spirit gives me to hear the Father’s voice. Prayer is not monologue but dialogue; God’s voice in response to mine in its most essential part. Listening to God’s voice is the secret of the assurance that He will listen to mine. ‘Incline thine ear, and hear;’ ‘Give ear to me;’ Hearken to my voice;’ are words which God speaks to man as well as man to God. His hearkening will depend on ours; the entrance His words find with me, will be the measure of the power of my words with Him. What God’s words are to me, is the test of what He Himself is to me, and so of the uprightness of my desire after Him in prayer.

It is this connection between His word and our prayer that Jesus points to when He says, ‘If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.’ The deep importance of this truth becomes clear if we notice the other expression of which this one has taken the place. More than once Jesus had said, “Abide in me and I in you.’ His abiding in us was the complement and the crown of our abiding in Him. But here, instead of ‘Ye in me and I in you,’ He says, ‘Ye in me and my words in you.’ His words abiding are the equivalent of Himself abiding.

What a view is here opened up to us of the place the words of God in Christ are to have in our spiritual life, and especially in our prayer. In a man’s words he reveals himself. In his promises he gives himself away, he binds himself to the one who receives his promise. In his commands he sets forth his will, seeks to make himself master of him whose obedience he claims, to guide and use him as if he were part of himself. It is through our words that spirit holds fellowship with spirit, that the spirit of one man passes over and transfers itself into another. It is through the words of a man, heard and accepted, and held fast and obeyed, that he can impart himself to another. But all this in a very relative and limited sense.

But when God, the infinite Being, in whom everything is life and power, spirit and truth, in the very deepest meaning of the words,—when God speaks forth Himself in His words, He does indeed give HIMSELF, His Love and His Life, His Will and His Power, to those who receive these words, in a reality passing comprehension. In every promise He puts Himself in our power to lay hold of and possess; in every command He puts Himself in our power for us to share with Him His Will, His Holiness, His Perfection. In God’s Word God gives us HIMSELF; His Word is nothing less than the Eternal Son, Christ Jesus. And so all Christ’s words are God’s words, full of a Divine quickening life and power. ‘The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.’

Those who have made the deaf and dumb their study, tell us how much the power of speaking depends on that of hearing, and how the loss of hearing in children is followed by that of speaking too. This is true in a wider sense: as we hear, so we speak. This is true in the highest sense of our intercourse with God. To offer a prayer—to give utterance to certain wishes and to appeal to certain promises—is an easy thing, and can be learned of man by human wisdom. But to pray in the Spirit, to speak words that reach and touch God, that affect and influence the powers of the unseen world,—such praying, such speaking, depends entirely upon our hearing God’s voice. Just as far as we listen to the voice and language that God speaks, and in the words of God receive His thoughts, His mind, His life, into our heart, we shall learn to speak in the voice and the language that God hears. It is the ear of the learner, wakened morning by morning, that prepares for the tongue of the learned, to speak to God as well as men, as should be (Isa. l. 4).

This hearing the voice of God is something more than the thoughtful study of the Word. There may be a study and knowledge of the Word, in which there is but little real fellowship with the living God. But there is also a reading of the Word, in the very presence of the Father, and under the leading of the Spirit, in which the Word comes to us in living power from God Himself; it is to us the very voice of the Father, a real personal fellowship with Himself. It is the living voice of God that enters the heart, that brings blessing and strength, and awakens the response of a living faith that reaches the heart of God again.

It is on this hearing the voice, that the power both to obey and believe depends. The chief thing is, not to know what God has said we

must do, but that God Himself says it to us. It is not the law, and not the book, not the knowledge of what is right, that works obedience, but the personal influence of God and His living fellowship. And even so it is not the knowledge of what God has promised, but the presence of God Himself as the Promiser, that awakens faith and trust in prayer. It is only in the full presence of God that disobedience and unbelief become impossible.

'If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, it shall be done unto you.' We see what this means. In the words the Saviour gives Himself. We must have the words in us, taken up into our will and life, reproduced in our disposition and conduct. We must have them abiding in us: our whole life one continued exposition of the words that are within, and filling us; the words revealing Christ within, and our life revealing Him without. It is as the words of Christ enter our very heart, become our life and influence it, that our words will enter His heart and influence Him. My prayer will depend on my life; what God's words are to me and in me, my words will be to God and in God. If I do what God says, God will do what I say.

How well the Old Testament saints understood this connection between God's words and ours, and how really prayer with them was the loving response to what they had heard God speak! If the word were a promise, they counted on God to do as He had spoken. 'Do as Thou hast said;' 'For Thou, Lord, hast spoken it;' 'According to Thy promise;' 'According to Thy word;' in such expressions they showed that what God spake in promise was the root and the life of what they spake in prayer. If the word was a command, they simply did as the Lord had spoken: 'So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken.' Their life was fellowship with God, the interchange of word and thought. What God spoke they heard and did; what they spoke God heard and did. In each word He speaks to us, the whole Christ gives Himself to fulfil it for us. For each word He asks no less that we give the whole man to keep that word, and to receive its fulfilment.

'If my words abide in you;' the condition is simple and clear. In His words His will is revealed. As the words abide in me, His will rules me; my will becomes the empty vessel which His will fills, the willing instrument which His will wields; He fills my inner being. In the exercise of obedience and faith my will becomes ever stronger, and is brought into deeper inner harmony with Him. He can fully trust it to will nothing but what He wills; He is not afraid to give the promise, 'If my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, it shall be done unto you.' To all who believe it, and act upon it, He will make it literally true.

Disciples of Christ! is it not becoming more and more clear to us that while we have been excusing our unanswered prayers, our impotence in prayer, with a fancied submission to God's wisdom and will, the real reason has been that our own feeble life has been the cause of our feeble prayers. Nothing can make strong men but the word coming to us from God's mouth: by that we must live. It is the word of Christ, loved, lived in, abiding in us, becoming through obedience and action part of our being, that makes us one with Christ, that fits us spiritually for touching, for taking hold of God. All that is of the world passeth away; he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. O let us yield heart and life to the words of Christ, the words in which He ever gives HIMSELF, the personal living Saviour, and His promise will be our rich experience: 'If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.'

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY!'

Blessed Lord! Thy lesson this day has again discovered to me my folly. I see how it is that my prayer has not been more believing and prevailing. I was more occupied with my speaking to Thee than Thy speaking to me. I did not understand that the secret of faith is this: there can be only so much faith as there is of the Living Word dwelling in the soul.

And Thy word had taught me so clearly: Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak; let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God. Lord, teach me that it is only with Thy word taken up into my life that my words can be taken into Thy heart; that Thy word, if it be a living power within me, will be a living power with Thee; what Thy mouth hath spoken Thy hand will perform.

Lord! deliver me from the uncircumcised ear. Give me the opened ear of the learner, wakened morning by morning to hear the Father's voice. Even as Thou didst only speak what Thou didst hear, may my speaking be the echo of Thy speaking to me. 'When Moses went into the tabernacle to speak with Him, he heard the voice of One speaking unto him from off the mercy-seat.' Lord, may it be so with me too. Let a life and character bearing the one mark, that Thy words abide and are seen in it, be the preparation for the full blessing: 'Ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' Amen.

TWENTY-THIRD LESSON.

'Bear fruit, that the Father may give what ye ask;'
Or, Obedience the Path to Power in Prayer.

'Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide: that whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He may give it you.'—John xv. 16.
'The fervent effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much.'—James. v. 16.

THE promise of the Father's giving whatsoever we ask is here once again renewed, in such a connection as to show us to whom it is that such wonderful influence in the council chamber of the Most High is to be granted. 'I chose you,' the Master says, 'and appointed you that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide;' and then He adds, to the end 'that whatsoever ye,' the fruit-bearing ones, 'shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you.' This is nothing but the fuller expression of what He had spoken in the words, 'If ye abide in me.' He had spoken of the object of this abiding as the bearing 'fruit,' 'more fruit,' 'much fruit;' in this was God to be glorified, and the mark of discipleship seen. No wonder that He now adds, that where the reality of the abiding is seen in fruit abounding and abiding, this would be the qualification for praying so as to obtain what we ask. Entire consecration to the fulfilment of our calling is the condition of effectual prayer, is the key to the unlimited blessings of Christ's wonderful prayer-promises.

There are Christians who fear that such a statement is at variance with the doctrine of free grace. But surely not of free grace rightly understood, nor with so many express statements of God's blessed word. Take the words of St. John (1 John iii. 22): 'Let us love in deed and truth; hereby shall we assure our heart before Him. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.'' Or take the oft-quoted words of James: 'The fervent effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much;' that is, of a man of whom, according to the definition of the Holy Spirit, it can be said, 'He that doeth righteousness, is righteous even as He is righteous.' Mark the spirit of so many of the Psalms, with their confident appeal to the integrity and righteousness of the supplicant. In Ps. xviii, David says: 'The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath He recompensed me. . . . I was upright before Him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity: therefore hath the Lord recompensed me according to my righteousness.' (Ps. xviii. 20-26. See also Ps. vii. 3-5, xv. 1, 2, xviii. 3, 6, xxvi. 1-6, cxix. 121, 153.) If we carefully consider such utterances in the light of the New Testament, we shall find them in perfect harmony with the explicit teaching of the Saviour's parting words: 'If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love;' 'Ye are my friends if ye do what I command you.' The word is indeed meant literally: 'I appointed you that ye should go and bear fruit, that,' then, 'whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you.'

Let us seek to enter into the spirit of what the Saviour here teaches us. There is a danger in our evangelical religion of looking too much at what it offers from one side, as a certain experience to be obtained in prayer and faith. There is another side which God's word puts very strongly, that of obedience as the only path to blessing. What we need is to realize that in our relationship to the Infinite Being whom we call God who has created and redeemed us, the first sentiment that ought to animate us is that of subjection: the surrender to His supremacy, His glory, His will, His pleasure, ought to be the first and uppermost thought of our life. The question is not, how we are to obtain and enjoy His favour, for in this the main thing may still be self. But what this Being in the very nature of things rightfully claims, and is infinitely and unspeakably worthy of, is that His glory and pleasure should be my one object. Surrender to His perfect and blessed will, a life of service and obedience, is the beauty and the charm of heaven. Service and obedience, these were the thoughts that were uppermost in the mind of the Son, when He dwelt upon earth. Service and obedience, these must become with us the chief objects of desire and aim, more so than rest or light, or joy or strength: in them we shall find the path to all the higher blessedness that awaits us.

Just note what a prominent place the Master gives it, not only in the 15th chapter, in connection with the abiding, but in the 14th, where He speaks of the indwelling of the Three-One God. In verse 15 we have it: 'If ye love me, keep my commandments, and the Spirit will be given you of the Father. Then verse 21: 'He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;' and he shall have the special love of my Father resting on him and the special manifestation of myself. And then again, verse 23, one of the highest of all the exceeding great and precious promises: 'If a man love me he will keep my words, and the Father and I will come and take up our abode with him.' Could words put it more clearly that obedience is the way to the indwelling of the Spirit, to His revealing the Son within us, and to His again preparing us to be the abode, the home of the Father? The indwelling of the Three-

One God is the heritage of them that obey. Obedience and faith are but two aspects of one act,—surrender to God and His will. As faith strengthens for obedience, it is in turn strengthened by it: faith is made perfect by works. It is to be feared that often our efforts to believe have been unavailing because we have not taken up the only position in which a large faith is legitimate or possible,—that of entire surrender to the honour and the will of God. It is the man who is entirely consecrated to God and His will who will find the power come to claim everything that His God has promised to be for him.

The application of this in the school of prayer is very simple, but very solemn. 'I chose you,' the Master says, 'and appointed you that ye should go and bear fruit,' much fruit (verses 5, 8), 'and that your fruit should abide,' that your life might be one of abiding fruit and abiding fruitfulness, 'that' thus, as fruitful branches abiding in me, 'whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you.' O how often we have sought to be able to pray the effectual prayer for much grace to bear fruit, and have wondered that the answer came not. It was because we were reversing the Master's order. We wanted to have the comfort and the joy and the strength first, that we might do the work easily and without any feeling of difficulty or self-sacrifice. And He wanted us in faith, without asking whether we felt weak or strong, whether the work was hard or easy, in the obedience of faith to do what He said: the path of fruit-bearing would have led us to the place and the power of prevailing prayer. Obedience is the only path that leads to the glory of God. Not obedience instead of faith, nor obedience to supply the shortcomings of faith; no, but faith's obedience gives access to all the blessings our God has for us. The baptism of the Spirit (xiv. 16), the manifestation of the Son (xiv. 21), the indwelling of the Father (xiv. 23), the abiding in Christ's love (xv. 10), the privilege of His holy friendship (xv. 14), and the power of all-prevailing prayer (xv. 16),—all wait for the obedient.

Let us take home the lessons. Now we know the great reason why we have not had power in faith to pray prevailingly. Our life was not as it should have been: simple downright obedience, abiding fruitfulness, was not its chief mark. And with our whole heart we approve of the Divine appointment: men to whom God is to give such influence in the rule of the world, as at their request to do what otherwise would not have taken place, men whose will is to guide the path in which God's will is to work, must be men who have themselves learned obedience, whose loyalty and submission to authority must be above all suspicion. Our whole soul approves the law: obedience and fruit-bearing, the path to prevailing prayer. And with shame we acknowledge how little our lives have yet borne this stamp.

Let us yield ourselves to take up the appointment the Saviour gives us. Let us study His relation to us as Master. Let us seek no more with each new day to think in the first place of comfort, or joy, or blessing. Let the first thought be: I belong to the Master. Every moment and every movement I must act as His property, as a part of Himself, as one who only seeks to know and do His will. A servant, a slave of Jesus Christ,—let this be the spirit that animates me. If He says, 'No longer do I call you servants, but I have called you friends,' let us accept the place of friends: 'Ye are my friends if ye do the things which I command you.'

The one thing He commands us as His branches is to bear fruit. Let us live to bless others, to testify of the life and the love there is in Jesus. Let us in faith and obedience give our whole life to that which Jesus chose us for and appointed us to—fruit-bearing. As we think of His electing us to this, and take up our appointment as coming from Him who always gives all He demands, we shall grow strong in the confidence that a life of fruit-bearing, abounding and abiding, is within our reach. And we shall understand why this fruit-bearing alone can be the path to the place of all prevailing prayer. It is the man who, in obedience to the Christ of God, is proving that he is doing what his Lord wills, for whom the Father will do whatsoever he will: 'Whatsoever we ask we receive, because we keep His commandments, and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.'

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

Blessed Master! teach me to apprehend fully what I only partly realize, that it is only through the will of God, accepted and acted out in obedience to His commands, that we obtain the power to grasp His will in His promises and fully to appropriate them in our prayers. And teach me that it is in the path of fruit-bearing that the deeper growth of the branch into the Vine can be perfected, and we attain to the perfect oneness with Thyself in which we ask whatsoever we will.

O Lord! Reveal to us, we pray Thee, how with all the hosts of heaven, and with Thyself the Son on earth, and with all the men of faith who have glorified Thee on earth, obedience to God is our highest privilege, because it gives access to oneness with Himself in that which is His highest glory—His all perfect will. And reveal to us, we pray Thee, how in keeping Thy commandments and bearing fruit according to Thy will, our spiritual nature will grow up to the full stature of the perfect man, with power to ask and to receive whatsoever we will.

O Lord Jesus! Reveal Thyself to us, and the reality of Thy purpose and Thy power to make these Thy wonderful promises the daily

experience of all who utterly yield themselves to Thee and Thy words. Amen.

TWENTY-FOURTH LESSON.

‘In my Name;’
Or, The All-prevailing Plea.

‘Whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do. If ye shall ask me anything in my Name, that will I do. That whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, He may give it you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If ye shall ask anything of the Father, He will give it you in my Name. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my Name: ask, and ye shall receive. In that day ye shall ask in my Name.’—John xiv. 13, 14, xv. 16, xvi. 23, 24, 26.

HITHERTO the disciples had not asked in the Name of Christ, nor had He Himself ever used the expression. The nearest approach is, ‘met together in my Name.’ Here in His parting words, He repeats the word unceasingly in connection with those promises of unlimited meaning, ‘Whatsoever,’ ‘Anything,’ ‘What ye will,’ to teach them and us that His Name is our only, but also our all-sufficient plea. The power of prayer and the answer depend on the right use of the Name.

What is a person’s name? That word or expression in which the person is called up or represented to us. When I mention or hear a name, it calls up before me the whole man, what I know of him, and also the impression he has made on me. The name of a king includes his honour, his power, his kingdom. His name is the symbol of his power. And so each name of God embodies and represents some part of the glory of the Unseen One. And the Name of Christ is the expression of all He has done and all He is and lives to do as our Mediator.

And what is it to do a thing in the name of another? It is to come with the power and authority of that other, as his representative and substitute. We know how such a use of another’s name always supposes a community of interest. No one would give another the free use of his name without first being assured that his honour and interest were as safe with that other as with himself.

And what is it when Jesus gives us power over His Name, the free use of it, with the assurance that whatever we ask in it will be given to us? The ordinary comparison of one person giving another, on some special occasion, the liberty to ask something in his name, comes altogether short here,—Jesus solemnly gives to all His disciples a general and unlimited power of the free use of His Name at all times for all they desire. He could not do this if He did not know that He could trust us with His interests, that His honour would be safe in our hands. The free use of the name of another is always the token of great confidence, of close union. He who gives his name to another stands aside, to let that other act for him; he who takes the name of another, gives up his own as of no value. When I go in the name of another, I deny myself, I take not only his name, but himself and what he is, instead of myself and what I am.

Such a use of the name of a person may be in virtue of a legal union. A merchant leaving his home and business, gives his chief clerk a general power, by which he can draw thousands of pounds in the merchant’s name. The clerk does this, not for himself, but only in the interests of the business. It is because the merchant knows and trusts him as wholly devoted to his interests and business, that he dares put his name and property at his command. When the Lord Jesus went to heaven, He left His work, the management of His kingdom on earth, in the hands of His servants. He could not do otherwise than also give them His Name to draw all the supplies they needed for the due conduct of His business. And they have the spiritual power to avail themselves of the Name of Jesus just to the extent to which they yield themselves to live only for the interests and the work of the Master. The use of the Name always supposes the surrender of our interests to Him whom we represent.

Or such a use of the name may be in virtue of a life union. In the case of the merchant and his clerk, the union is temporary. But we know how oneness of life on earth gives oneness of name: a child has the father’s name because he has his life. And often the child of a good father has been honoured or helped by others for the sake of the name he bore. But this would not last long if it were found that it was only a name, and that the father’s character was wanting. The name and the character or spirit must be in harmony. When such is the case, the child will have a double claim on the father’s friends: the character secures and increases the love and esteem rendered first for the name’s sake. So it is with Jesus and the believer: we are one, we have one life, one Spirit with Him; for this reason we may come in His Name. Our power in using that Name, whether with God, or men, or devils depends on the measure of our spiritual life-union. The use of the name rests on the unity of life; the Name and the Spirit of Jesus are one.[1]

Or the union that empowers to the use of the Name may be the union of love. When a bride whose life has been one of poverty,

becomes united to the bridegroom, she gives up her own name, to be called by his, and has now the full right to use it. She purchases in his name, and that name is not refused. And this is done because the bridegroom has chosen her for himself, counting on her to care for his interests: they are now one. And so the Heavenly Bridegroom could do nothing less; having loved us and made us one with Himself, what could He do but give those who bear His Name the right to present it before the Father, or to come with it to Himself for all they need. And there is no one who gives himself really to live in the Name of Jesus, who does not receive in ever-increasing measure the spiritual capacity to ask and receive in that Name what he will. The bearing of the name of another supposes my having given up my own, and with it my own independent life; but then, as surely, my possession of all there is in the name I have taken instead of my own.

Such illustrations show us how defective the common view is of a messenger sent to ask in the name of another, or a guilty one appealing to the name of a surety. No Jesus Himself is with the Father; it is not an absent one in whose name we come. Even when we pray to Jesus Himself, it must be in His Name. The name represents the person; to ask in the Name is to ask in full union of interest and life and love with Himself, as one who lives in and for Him. Let the Name of Jesus only have undivided supremacy in my heart and life, my faith will grow to the assurance that what I ask in that Name cannot be refused. The name and the power of asking go together: when the Name of Jesus has become the power that rules my life, its power in prayer with God will be seen too.

We see thus that everything depends on our own relation to the Name: the power it has on my life is the power it will have in my prayers. There is more than one expression in Scripture which can make this clear to us. When it says, ‘Do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus,’ we see how this is the counterpart of the other, ‘Ask all.’ To do all and to ask all in His Name, these go together. When we read, ‘We shall walk in the Name of our God,’ we see how the power of the Name must rule in the whole life; only then will it have power in prayer. It is not to the lips but to the life God looks to see what the Name is to us. When Scripture speaks of ‘men who have given their lives for the Name of the Lord Jesus,’ or of one ‘ready to die for the Name of the Lord Jesus,’ we see what our relation to the Name must be: when it is everything to me, it will obtain everything for me. If I let it have all I have, it will let me have all it has.

‘WHATSOEVER ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do.’ Jesus means the promise literally. Christians have sought to limit it: it looked too free; it was hardly safe to trust man so unconditionally. We did not understand that the word ‘in my Name’ is its own safeguard. It is a spiritual power which no one can use further than he obtains the capacity for, by his living and acting in that Name. As we bear that Name before men, we have power to use it before God. O let us plead for God’s Holy Spirit to show us what the Name means, and what the right use of it is. It is through the Spirit that the Name, which is above every name in heaven, will take the place of supremacy in our heart and life too.

Disciples of Jesus! Let the lessons of this day enter deep into your hearts. The Master says: Only pray in my Name; whatsoever ye ask will be given. Heaven is set open to you; the treasures and powers of the world of spirit are placed at your disposal on behalf of men around you. O come, and let us learn to pray in the Name of Jesus. As to the disciples, He says to us, ‘Hitherto ye have not asked in my Name: ask, and ye shall receive.’ Let each disciple of Jesus seek to avail himself of the rights of his royal priesthood, and use the power placed at his disposal for his circle and his work. Let Christians awake and hear the message: your prayer can obtain what otherwise will be withheld, can accomplish what otherwise remains undone. O awake, and use the name of Jesus to open the treasures of heaven for this perishing world. Learn as the servants of the King to use His Name: ‘WHATSOEVER ye shall ask in my Name, THAT WILL I DO.’

‘LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

Blessed Lord! It is as if each lesson Thou givest me has such fulness and depths of meaning, that if I can only learn that one, I shall know how to pray aright. This day I feel again as if I needed but one prayer every day: Lord! Teach me what it is to pray in Thy Name. Teach me so to live and act, to walk and speak, so to do all in the Name of Jesus, that my prayer cannot be anything else but in that blessed Name too.

And teach me, Lord! to hold fast the precious promise that WHATSOEVER we ask in Thy Name, Thou wilt do, the Father will give. Though I do not yet fully understand, and still less have fully attained, the wondrous union Thou meanest when Thou sayest, IN MY NAME, I would yet hold fast the promise until it fills my heart with the undoubting assurance: Anything in the Name of Jesus.

O my Lord! let Thy Holy Spirit teach me this. Thou didst say of Him, ‘The Comforter, whom the Father shall send IN MY NAME.’ He knows what it is to be sent from heaven in Thy Name, to reveal and to honour the power of that Name in Thy servants, to use that Name alone, and so to glorify Thee. Lord Jesus! let Thy Spirit dwell in me, and fill me. I would, I do yield my whole being to

His rule and leading. Thy Name and Thy Spirit are one; through Him Thy Name will be the strength of my life and my prayer. Then I shall be able for Thy Name's sake to forsake all, in Thy Name to speak to men and to God, and to prove that this is indeed the Name above every name.

Lord Jesus! O teach me by Thy Holy Spirit to pray in Thy Name. Amen.

NOTE.

'What is meant by praying in Christ's name? It cannot mean simply appearing before God with faith in the mediation of the Saviour. When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, He supplied them with petitions. And afterwards Jesus said to them, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my Name." Until the Spirit came, the seven petitions of the Lord's prayer lay as it were dormant within them. When by the Holy Ghost Christ descended into their hearts, they desired the very blessings which Christ as our High Priest obtains for us by His prayer from the Father. And such petitions are always answered. The Father is always willing to give what Christ asks. The Spirit of Christ always teaches and influences us to offer the petitions which Christ ratifies and presents to the Father. To pray in Christ's name is therefore to be identified with Christ as to our righteousness, and to be identified with Christ in our desires by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. To pray in the Spirit, to pray according to the will of the Father, to pray in Christ's name, are identical expressions. The Father Himself loveth us, and is willing to hear us: two intercessors, Christ the Advocate above, and the Holy Ghost, the Advocate within, are the gifts of His love.

'This view may appear at first less consoling than a more prevalent one, which refers prayer in Christ's name chiefly to our trust in Christ's merit. The defect of this opinion is, that it does not combine the intercession of the Saviour with the will of the Father, and the indwelling Spirit's aid in prayer. Nor does it fully realize the mediation of Christ; for the mediation consists not merely in that for Christ's sake the Holy Father is able to regard me and my prayer; but also, in that Christ Himself presents my petitions as His petitions, desired by Him for me, even as all blessings are purchased for me by His precious blood.

'In all prayer, the one essential condition is that we are able to offer it in the name of Jesus, as according to His desire for us, according to the Father's will, according to the Spirit's teaching. And thus praying in Christ's name is impossible without self-examination, without reflection, without self-denial; in short, without the aid of the Spirit.'—Saphiv, The Lord's Prayer, pp. 411, 142.

1 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name,' that is, in my nature; for things with God are called according to their nature. We ask in Christ's Name, not when at the end of some request we say, 'This I ask in the Name of Jesus Christ,' but when we pray according to His nature, which is love, which seeketh not its own but only the will of God and the good of all creatures. Such asking is the cry of His own Spirit in our hearts.—Jukes. The New Man.

TWENTY-FIFTH LESSON.

‘At that day;’
Or, The Holy Spirit and Prayer.

‘In that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my Name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. At that day ye shall ask in my Name: and I say not, that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father Himself loveth you.’—John xvi. 23-26.
‘Praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God.’—JUDE 20, 21.

THE words of John (I John ii. 12-14) to little children, to young men, and to fathers suggest the thought that there often are in the Christian life three great stages of experience. The first, that of the new-born child, with the assurance and the joy of forgiveness. The second, the transition stage of struggle and growth in knowledge and strength: young men growing strong, God’s word doing its work in them and giving them victory over the Evil One. And then the final stage of maturity and ripeness: the Fathers, who have entered deeply into the knowledge and fellowship of the Eternal One.

In Christ’s teaching on prayer there appear to be three stages in the prayer-life, somewhat analogous. In the Sermon on the Mount we have the initial stage: His teaching is all comprised in one word, Father. Pray to your Father, your Father sees, hears, knows, and will reward: how much more than any earthly father! Only be childlike and trustful. Then comes later on something like the transition stage of conflict and conquest, in words like these: ‘This sort goeth not out but by fasting and prayer;’ ‘Shall not God avenge His own elect who cry day and night unto Him?’ And then we have in the parting words, a higher stage. The children have become men: they are now the Master’s friends, from whom He has no secrets, to whom He says, ‘All things that I heard from my Father I made known unto you;’ and to whom, in the oft-repeated ‘whatsoever ye will,’ He hands over the keys of the kingdom. Now the time has come for the power of prayer in His Name to be proved.

The contrast between this final stage and the previous preparatory ones our Saviour marks most distinctly in the words we are to meditate on: ‘Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my Name;’ ‘At that day ye shall ask in my Name. ‘ We know what ‘at that day’ means. It is the day of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The great work Christ was to do on the cross, the mighty power and the complete victory to be manifested in His resurrection and ascension, were to issue in the coming down from heaven, as never before, of the glory of God to dwell in men. The Spirit of the glorified Jesus was to come and be the life of His disciples. And one of the marks of that wonderful spirit-dispensation was to be a power in prayer hitherto unknown—prayer in the Name of Jesus, asking and obtaining whatsoever they would, is to be the manifestation of the reality of the Spirit’s indwelling.

To understand how the coming of the Holy Spirit was indeed to commence a new epoch in the prayer-world, we must remember who He is, what His work, and what the significance of His not being given until Jesus was glorified. It is in the Spirit that God exists, for He is Spirit. It is in the Spirit that the Son was begotten of the Father: it is in the fellowship of the Spirit that the Father and the Son are one. The eternal never-ceasing giving to the Son which is the Father’s prerogative and the eternal asking and receiving which is the Son’s right and blessedness—it is through the Spirit that this communion of life and love is maintained. It has been so from all eternity. It is so specially now, when the Son as Mediator ever liveth to pray. The great work which Jesus began on earth of reconciling in His own body God and man, He carries on in heaven. To accomplish this He took up into His own person the conflict between God’s righteousness and our sin. On the cross He once for all ended the struggle in His own body. And then He ascended to heaven, that thence He might in each member of His body carry out the deliverance and manifest the victory He had obtained. It is to do this that He ever liveth to pray; in His unceasing intercession He places Himself in living fellowship with the unceasing prayer of His redeemed ones. Or rather, it is His unceasing intercession which shows itself in their prayers, and gives them a power they never had before.

And He does this through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the glorified Jesus, was not (John vii. 39), could not be, until He had been glorified. This gift of the Father was something distinctively new, entirely different from what Old Testament saints had known. The work that the blood effected in heaven when Christ entered within the veil, was something so true and new, the redemption of our human nature into fellowship with His resurrection-power and His exaltation-glory was so intensely real, the

taking up of our humanity in Christ into the life of the Three-One God was an event of such inconceivable significance, that the Holy Spirit, who had to come from Christ's exalted humanity to testify in our hearts of what Christ had accomplished, was indeed no longer only what He had been in the Old Testament. It was literally true 'the Holy Spirit was not yet, for Christ was not yet glorified.' He came now first as the Spirit of the glorified Jesus. Even as the Son, who was from eternity God, had entered upon a new existence as man, and returned to heaven with what He had not before, so the Blessed Spirit, whom the Son, on His ascension, received from the Father (Acts ii. 33) into His glorified humanity, came to us with a new life, which He had not previously to communicate. Under the Old Testament He was invoked as the Spirit of God: at Pentecost He descended as the Spirit of the glorified Jesus, bringing down and communicating to us the full fruit and power of the accomplished redemption.

It is in the intercession of Christ that the continued efficacy and application of His redemption is maintained. And it is through the Holy Spirit descending from Christ to us that we are drawn up into the great stream of His ever-ascending prayers. The Spirit prays for us without words: in the depths of a heart where even thoughts are at times formless, the Spirit takes us up into the wonderful flow of the life of the Three-One God. Through the Spirit, Christ's prayers become ours, and ours are made His: we ask what we will, and it is given to us. We then understand from experience, 'Hitherto ye have not asked in my Name. At that day ye shall ask in my Name.'

Brother! what we need to pray in the Name of Christ, to ask that we may receive that our joy may be full, is the baptism of this Holy Ghost. This is more than the Spirit of God under the Old Testament. This is more than the Spirit of conversion and regeneration the disciples had before Pentecost. This is more than the Spirit with a measure of His influence and working. This is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the glorified Jesus in His exaltation-power, coming on us as the Spirit of the indwelling Jesus, revealing the Son and the Father within. (John xiv. 16-23.) It is when this Spirit is the Spirit not of our hours of prayer, but of our whole life and walk, when this Spirit glorifies Jesus in us by revealing the completeness of His work, and making us wholly one with Him and like Him, that we can pray in His Name, because we are in very deed one with Him. Then it is that we have that immediateness of access to the Father of which Jesus says, 'I say not that I will pray the Father for you.' Oh! we need to understand and believe that to be filled with this, the Spirit of the glorified One, is the one need of God's believing people. Then shall we realize what it is, 'with all prayer and supplication to be praying at all seasons in the Spirit,' and what it is, 'praying in the Holy Ghost, to keep ourselves in the love of God.' 'At that day ye shall ask in my Name.'

And so once again the lesson comes: What our prayer avails, depends upon what we are and what our life is. It is living in the Name of Christ that is the secret of praying in the Name of Christ; living in the Spirit that fits for praying in the Spirit. It is abiding in Christ that gives the right and power to ask what we will: the extent of the abiding is the exact measure of the power in prayer. It is the Spirit dwelling within us that prays, not in words and thoughts always, but in a breathing and a being deeper than utterance. Just so much as there is of Christ's Spirit in us, is there real prayer. Our lives, our lives, O let our lives be full of Christ, and full of His Spirit, and the wonderfully unlimited promises to our prayer will no longer appear strange. 'Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my Name. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. At that day ye shall ask in my Name. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the father in my Name, He will give it you.'

'LORD , TEACH US TO PRAY.'

O my God! in holy awe I bow before Thee, the Three in One. Again I have seen how the mystery of prayer is the mystery of the Holy Trinity. I adore the Father who ever hears, and the Son who ever lives to pray, and the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, to lift us up into the fellowship of that ever-blessed, never-ceasing asking and receiving. I bow, my God, in adoring worship, before the infinite condescension that thus, through the Holy Spirit, takes us and our prayers into the Divine Life, and its fellowship of love.

O my Blessed Lord Jesus! Teach me to understand Thy lesson, that it is the indwelling Spirit, streaming from Thee, uniting to Thee, who is the Spirit of prayer. Teach me what it is as an empty, wholly consecrated vessel, to yield myself to His being my life. Teach me to honour and trust Him, as a living Person, to lead my life and my prayer. Teach me specially in prayer to wait in holy silence, and give Him place to breathe within me His unutterable intercession. And teach me that through Him it is possible to pray without ceasing, and to pray without failing, because He makes me partaker of the never-ceasing and never-failing intercession in which Thou, the Son, dost appear before the Father. Yea, Lord, fulfil in me Thy promise, At that day ye shall ask in my Name. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, that will He give.' Amen.

NOTE.

Prayer has often been compared to breathing: we have only to carry out the comparison fully to see how wonderful the place is which the Holy Spirit occupies. With every breath we expel the impure air which would soon cause our death, and inhale again the fresh air to which we owe our life. So we give out from us, in confession the sins, in prayer the needs and the desires of our heart. And in drawing in our breath again, we inhale the fresh air of the promises, and the love, and the life of God in Christ. We do this through the Holy Spirit, who is the breath of our life.

And this He is because He is the breath of God. The Father breathes Him into us, to unite Himself with our life. And then just as on every expiration there follows again the inhaling or drawing in of the breath, so God draws in again His breath, and the Spirit returns to Him laden with the desires and needs of our hearts. And thus the Holy Spirit is the breath of the life of God, and the breath of the new life in us. As God breathes Him out, we receive Him in answer to prayer; as we breathe Him back again, He rises to God laden with our supplications. As the Spirit of God, in whom the Father and the Son are one, and the intercession of the Son reaches the Father, He is to us the Spirit of prayer. True prayer is the living experience of the truth of the Holy Trinity. The Spirit's breathing, the Son's intercession, the Father's will, these three become one in us.

TWENTY-SIXTH LESSON.

‘I have prayed for thee;’
Or, Christ the Intercessor.

‘But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.’— Luke xxii. 32.
‘I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you.’— John xvi. 26.
‘He ever liveth to make intercession.’— Heb. vii. 25.

ALL growth in the spiritual life is connected with the clearer insight into what Jesus is to us. The more I realize that Christ must be all to me and in me, that all in Christ is indeed for me, the more I learn to live the real life of faith, which, dying to self, lives wholly in Christ. The Christian life is no longer the vain struggle to live right, but the resting in Christ and finding strength in Him as our life, to fight the fight and gain the victory of faith. This is specially true of the life of prayer. As it too comes under the law of faith alone, and is seen in the light of the fulness and completeness there is in Jesus, the believer understands that it need no longer be a matter of strain or anxious care, but an experience of what Christ will do for him and in him—a participation in that life of Christ which, as on earth, so in heaven, ever ascends to the Father as prayer. And he begins to pray, not only trusting in the merits of Jesus, or in the intercession by which our unworthy prayers are made acceptable, but in that near and close union in virtue of which He prays in us and we in Him.[1] The whole of salvation is Christ Himself: He has given HIMSELF to us; He Himself lives in us. Because He prays, we pray too. As the disciples, when they saw Jesus pray, asked Him to make them partakers of what He knew of prayer, so we, now we see Him as intercessor on the throne, know that He makes us participate with Himself in the life of prayer.

How clearly this comes out in the last night of His life. In His high-priestly prayer (John xvii.), He shows us how and what He has to pray to the Father, and will pray when once ascended to heaven. And yet He had in His parting address so repeatedly also connected His going to the Father with their new life of prayer. The two would be ultimately connected: His entrance on the work of His eternal intercession would be the commencement and the power of their new prayer-life in His Name. It is the sight of Jesus in His intercession that gives us power to pray in His Name: all right and power of prayer is Christ’s; He makes us share in His intercession.

To understand this, think first of His intercession: He ever liveth to make intercession. The work of Christ on earth as Priest was but a beginning. It was as Aaron He shed His blood; it is as Melchizedek that He now lives within the veil to continue His work, after the power of the eternal life. As Melchizedek is more glorious than Aaron, so it is in the work of intercession that the atonement has its true power and glory. ‘It is Christ that died: yea more, who is even at the right hand of God, who maketh intercession for us.’ That intercession is an intense reality, a work that is absolutely necessary, and without which the continued application of redemption cannot take place. In the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus the wondrous reconciliation took place, by which man became partaker of the Divine life and blessedness. But the real personal appropriation of this reconciliation in each of His members here below cannot take place without the unceasing exercise of His Divine power by the head in heaven. In all conversion and sanctification, in every victory over sin and the world, there is a real forth-putting of the power of Him who is mighty to save. And this exercise of His power only takes place through His prayer: He asks of the Father, and receives from the Father. ‘He is able to save to the uttermost, because He ever liveth to make intercession.’ There is not a need of His people but He receives in intercession what the Godhead has to give: His mediation on the throne is as real and indispensable as on the cross. Nothing takes place without His intercession: it engages all His time and powers, is His unceasing occupation at the right hand of the Father.

And we participate not only in the benefits of this His work, but in the work itself. This because we are His body. Body and members are one: ‘The head cannot say to the feet, I have no need of thee.’ We share with Jesus in all He is and has: ‘The glory which Thou gavest me, I have given them.’ We are partakers of His life, His righteousness, His work: we share with Him in His intercession too; it is not a work He does without us.

We do this because we are partakers of His life: ‘Christ is our life;’ ‘No longer I, but Christ liveth in me.’ The life in Him and in us is identical, one and the same. His life in us is an ever-praying life. When it descends and takes possession of us, it does not lose its character; in us too it is the every-praying life—a life that without ceasing asks and receives from God. And this not as if there were two separate currents of prayer rising upwards, one from Him, and one from His people. No, but the substantial life-union is also prayer-union: what He prays passes through us, what we pray passes through Him. He is the angel with the golden censer: ‘UNTO HIM there was given much incense,’ the secret of acceptable prayer, ‘that He should add it unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar.’ We live, we abide in Him, the Interceding One.

The Only-begotten is the only one who has the right to pray: to Him alone it was said, 'Ask, and it shall be given Thee.' As in all other things the fulness dwells in Him, so the true prayer-fulness too; He alone has the power of prayer. And just as the growth of the spiritual life consists in the clearer insight that all the treasures are in Him, and that we too are in Him, to receive each moment what we possess in Him, grace for grace, so with the prayer-life too. Our faith in the intercession of Jesus must not only be that He prays in our stead, when we do not or cannot pray, but that, as the Author of our life and our faith, He draws us on to pray in unison with Himself. Our prayer must be a work of faith in this sense too, that as we know that Jesus communicates His whole life in us, He also out of that prayerfulness which is His alone breathes into us our praying.

To many a believer it was a new epoch in his spiritual life when it was revealed to him how truly and entirely Christ was his life, standing good as surety for his remaining faithful and obedient. It was then first that he really began to life a faith-life. No less blessed will be the discovery that Christ is surety for our prayer-life too, the centre and embodiment of all prayer, to be communicated by Him through the Holy Spirit to His people. 'He ever liveth to make intercession' as the Head of the body, as the Leader in that new and living way which He hath opened up, as the Author and the Perfecter of our faith. He provides in everything for the life of His redeemed ones by giving His own life in them: He cares for their life of prayer, by taking them up into His heavenly prayer-life, by giving and maintaining His prayer-life within them. 'I have prayed for thee,' not to render thy faith needless, but 'that thy faith fail not:' our faith and prayer of faith is rooted in His. It is, 'if ye abide in me,' the ever-living Intercessor, and pray with me and in me: 'ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.'

The thought of our fellowship in the intercession of Jesus reminds us of what He has taught us more than once before, how all these wonderful prayer-promises have as their aim and their justification, the glory of God in the manifestation of His kingdom and the salvation of sinners. As long as we only or chiefly pray for ourselves, the promises of the last night must remain a sealed book to us. It is to the fruit-bearing branches of the Vine; it is to disciples sent into the world as the Father sent Him, to live for perishing men; it is to His faithful servants and intimate friends who take up the work He leaves behind, who have like their Lord become as the seed-corn, losing its life to multiply it manifold;—it is to such that the promises are given. Let us each find out what the work is, and who the souls are entrusted to our special prayers; let us make our intercession for them our life of fellowship with God, and we shall not only find the promises of power in prayer made true to us, but we shall then first begin to realize how our abiding in Christ and His abiding in us makes us share in His own joy of blessing and saving men.

O most wonderful intercession of our Blessed Lord Jesus, to which we not only owe everything, but in which we are taken up as active partners and fellow-workers! Now we understand what it is to pray in the Name of Jesus, and why it has such power. In His Name, in His Spirit, in Himself, in perfect union with Him. O wondrous, ever active, and most efficacious intercession of the man Christ Jesus! When shall we be wholly taken up into it and always pray in it?

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

Blessed Lord! In lowly adoration I would again bow before Thee. Thy whole redemption work has now passed into prayer; all that now occupies Thee in maintaining and dispensing what Thou didst purchase with Thy blood is only prayer. Thou ever livest to pray. And because we are and abide in Thee, the direct access to the Father is always open, our life can be one of unceasing prayer, and the answer to our prayer is sure.

Blessed Lord! Thou hast invited Thy people to be Thy fellow-workers in a life of prayer. Thou hast united Thyself with Thy people and makest them as Thy body share with Thee in that ministry of intercession through which alone the world can be filled with the fruit of Thy redemption and the glory of the Father. With more liberty than ever I come to Thee, my Lord, and beseech Thee: Teach me to pray. Thy life is prayer, Thy life is mine. Lord! teach me to pray, in Thee, like Thee.

And, O my Lord! Give me specially to know, as Thou didst promise Thy disciples, that Thou art in the Father, and I in Thee, and Thou in me. Let the uniting power of the Holy Spirit make my whole life an abiding in Thee and Thy intercession, so that my prayer may be its echo, and the Father hear me in Thee and Thee in me. Lord Jesus! let Thy mind in everything be in me, and my life in everything by in Thee. So shall I be prepared to be the channel through which Thy intercession pours its blessing on the world. Amen.

NOTE.

'The new epoch of prayer in the Name of Jesus is pointed out by Christ as the time of the outpouring of the Spirit, in which the disciples enter upon a more enlightened apprehension of the economy of redemption, and become as clearly conscious of their oneness with Jesus as of His oneness with the Father. Their prayer in the Name of Jesus is now directly to the Father Himself. "I say not that I will pray for you, for the Father Himself loveth you," Jesus says; while He had previously spoken of the time before the Spirit's coming: "I will pray the Father, and He will give you the Comforter." This prayer thus has as its central thought the insight into our being united to God in Christ as on both sides the living bond of union between God and us (John xvii. 23: "I in them and Thou in me"), so that in Jesus we behold the Father as united to us, and ourselves as united to the Father. Jesus Christ must have been revealed to us, not only through the truth in the mind, but in our inmost personal consciousness as the living personal reconciliation, as He in whom God's Fatherhood and Father-love have been perfectly united with human nature and it with God. Not that with the immediate prayer to the Father, the mediatorship of Christ is set aside; but it is no longer looked at as something external, existing outside of us, but as a real living spiritual existence within us, so that the Christ for us, the Mediator, has really become Christ in us.

'When the consciousness of this oneness between God in Christ and us in Christ still is wanting, or has been darkened by the sense of guilt, then the prayer of faith looks to our Lord as the Advocate, who pays the Father for us. (Compare John xvi. 26 with John xiv. 16, 17; ix. 20; Luke xxi. 32; I John ii. 1.) To take Christ thus in prayer as Advocate, is according to John xvi. 26 not perfectly the same as the prayer in His Name. Christ's advocacy is meant to lead us on to that inner self-standing life-union with Him, and with the Father in Him, in virtue of which Christ is He in whom God enters into immediate relation and unites Himself with us, and in whom we in all circumstances enter into immediate relation with God. Even so the prayer in the Name of Jesus does not consist in our prayer at His command: the disciples had prayed thus ever since the Lord had given them His "Our Father," and yet He says, "Hitherto ye have not prayed in my Name." Only when the mediation of Christ has become, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, life and power within us, and so His mind, as it found expression in His word and work, has taken possession of and filled our personal consciousness and will, so that in faith and love we have Jesus in us as the Reconciler who has actually made us one with God: only then His Name, which included His nature and His work, is become truth and power in us (not only for us), and we have in the Name of Jesus the free, direct access to the Father which is sure of being heard. Prayer in the Name of Jesus is the liberty of a son with the Father, just as Jesus had this as the First-begotten. We pray in the place of Jesus, not as if we could put ourselves in His place, but in as far as we are in Him and He in us. We go direct to the Father, but only as the Father is in Christ, not as if He were separate from Christ. Wherever thus the inner man does not live in Christ and has Him not present as the Living One, where His word is not ruling in the heart in its Spirit-power, where His truth and life have not become the life of our soul, it is vain to think that a formula like "for the sake of Thy dear Son" will avail.'—Christliche Ethik, von Dr. I. T. Beck, Tubingen, iii. 39.

1 See on the difference between having Christ as an Advocate or Intercessor who stands outside of us, and the having Him within us, we abiding in Him and He in us through the Holy Spirit perfecting our union with Him, so that we ourselves can come directly to the Father in His Name,—the note above from Beck of Tubingen.

TWENTY-SEVENTH LESSON.

'Father, I will;'
Or, Christ the High Priest

'Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me may be with me
where I am.'—John xvii. 24.

IN His parting address, Jesus gives His disciples the full revelation of what the New Life was to be, when once the kingdom of God had come in power. In the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, in union with Him the heavenly Vine, in their going forth to witness and to suffer for Him, they were to find their calling and their blessedness. In between His setting forth of their future new life, the Lord had repeatedly given the most unlimited promises as to the power their prayers might have. And now in closing, He Himself proceeds to pray. To let His disciples have the joy of knowing what His intercession for them in heaven as their High Priest will be, He gives this precious legacy of His prayer to the Father. He does this at the same time because they as priests are to share in His work of intercession, that they and we might know how to perform this holy work. In the teaching of our Lord on this last night, we have learned to understand that these astonishing prayer-promises have not been given in our own behalf, but in the interest of the Lord and His kingdom: it is from the Lord Himself alone that we can learn what the prayer in His Name is to be and to obtain. We have understood that to pray in His Name is to pray in perfect unity with Himself: the high-priestly prayer will teach all that the prayer in the Name of Jesus may ask and expect.

This prayer is ordinarily divided into three parts. Our Lord first prays for Himself (v. 1-5), then for His disciples (6-19), and last for all the believing people through all ages (20-26). The follower of Jesus, who gives himself to the work of intercession, and would fain try how much of blessing he can pray down upon his circle in the Name of Jesus, will in all humility let himself be led of the Spirit to study this wonderful prayer as one of the most important lessons of the school of prayer.

First of all, Jesus prays for Himself, for His being glorified, that so He may glorify the Father. 'Father! Glorify Thy Son. And now, Father, glorify me.' And He brings forward the grounds on which He thus prays. A holy covenant had been concluded between the Father and the Son in heaven. The Father had promised Him power over all flesh as the reward of His work: He had done the work, He had glorified the Father, and His one purpose is now still further to glorify Him. With the utmost boldness He asks that the Father may glorify Him, that He may now be and do for His people all He has undertaken.

Disciple of Jesus! here you have the first lesson in your work of priestly intercession, to be learned from the example of your great High Priest. To pray in the Name of Jesus is to pray in unity, in sympathy with Him. As the Son began His prayer by making clear His relation to the Father, pleading His work and obedience and His desire to see the Father glorified, do so too. Draw near and appear before the Father in Christ. Plead His finished work. Say that you are one with it, that you trust on it, live in it. Say that you too have given yourself to finish the work the Father has given you to do, and to live alone for His glory. And ask then confidently that the Son may be glorified in you. This is praying in the Name, in the very words, in the Spirit of Jesus, in union with Jesus Himself. Such prayer has power. If with Jesus you glorify the Father, the Father will glorify Jesus by doing what you ask in His Name. It is only when your own personal relation on this point, like Christ's, is clear with God, when you are glorifying Him, and seeking all for His glory, that like Christ, you will have power to intercede for those around you.

Our Lord next prays for the circle of His disciples. He speaks of them as those whom the Father has given Him. Their chief mark is that they have received Christ's word. He says of them that He now sends them into the world in His place, just as the Father had sent Himself. And He asks two things for them: that the Father keep them from the evil one, and sanctify them through His Word, because He sanctifies Himself for them.

Just like the Lord, each believing intercessor has his own immediate circle for whom he first prays. Parents have their children, teachers their pupils, pastors their flocks, all workers their special charge, all believers those whose care lies upon their hearts. It is of great consequence that intercession should be personal, pointed, and definite. And then our first prayer must always be that they may receive the word. But this prayer will not avail unless with our Lord we say, 'I have given them Thy word:' it is this gives us liberty and power in intercession for souls. Not only pray for them, but speak to them. And when they have received the word, let us pray much for their being kept from the evil one, for their being sanctified through that word. Instead of being hopeless or judging or giving up those who fall, let us pray for our circle, 'Father! Keep them in Thy Name;' 'Sanctify them through Thy truth.' Prayer in the Name of Jesus availeth much: 'What ye will shall be done unto you.'

And then follows our Lord’s prayer for a still wider circle. ‘I pray not only for these, but for them who through their word shall believe.’ His priestly heart enlarges itself to embrace all places and all time, and He prays that all who belong to Him may everywhere be one, as God’s proof to the world of the divinity of His mission, and then that they may ever be with Him in His glory. Until then ‘that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.’

The disciple of Jesus, who has first in his own circle proved the power of prayer, cannot confine himself within its limits: he prays for the Church universal and its different branches. He prays specially for the unity of the Spirit and of love. He prays for its being one in Christ, as a witness to the world that Christ, who hath wrought such a wonder as to make love triumph over selfishness and separation, is indeed the Son of God sent from heaven. Every believer ought to pray much that the unity of the Church, not in external organizations, but in spirit and in truth, may be made manifest.

So much for the matter of the prayer. Now for its mode. Jesus says, ‘FATHER! I WILL.’ On the ground of His right as Son, and the Father’s promise to Him, and His finished work, He might do so. The Father had said to Him, ‘Ask of me, and I will give Thee.’ He simply availed Himself of the Father’s promise. Jesus has given us a like promise: ‘Whatsoever ye will shall be done unto you.’ He asks me in His Name to say what I will. Abiding in Him, in a living union with Him in which man is nothing and Christ all, the believer has the liberty to take up that word of His High Priest and, in answer to the question ‘What wilt thou?’ to say, ‘FATHER! I WILLall that Thou hast promised.’ This is nothing but true faith; this is honouring God: to be assured that such confidence in saying what I will is indeed acceptable to Him. At first sight, our heart shrinks from the expression; we feel neither the liberty nor the power to speak thus. It is a word for which alone in the most entire abnegation of our will grace will be given, but for which grace will most assuredly be given to each one who loses his will in his Lord’s. He that loseth his will shall find it; he that gives up his will entirely shall find it again renewed and strengthened with a Divine Strength. ‘FATHER! I WILL:’ this is the keynote of the everlasting, ever-active, all-prevailing intercession of our Lord in heaven. It is only in union with Him that our prayer avails; in union with Him it avails much. If we but abide in Him, living, and walking, and doing all things in His Name; if we but come and bring each separate petition, tested and touched by His Word and Spirit, and cast it into the mighty stream of intercession that goes up from Him, to be borne upward and presented before the Father;—we shall have the full confidence that we receive the petitions we ask: the ‘Father! I will’ will be breathed into us by the Spirit Himself. We shall lose ourselves in Him, and become nothing, to find that in our impotence we have power and prevail.

Disciples of Jesus! Called to be like your Lord in His priestly intercession, when, O when! Shall we awaken to the glory, passing all conception, of this our destiny to plead and prevail with God for perishing men? O when shall we shake off the sloth that clothes itself with the pretence of humility, and yield ourselves wholly to God’s Spirit, that He may fill our wills with light and with power, to know, and to take, and to possess all that our God is waiting to give to a will that lays hold on Him.

‘LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

O my Blessed High Priest! who am I that Thou shouldest thus invite me to share with Thee in Thy power of prevailing intercession! And why, O my Lord! am I so slow of heart to understand and believe and exercise this wonderful privilege to which Thou hast redeemed Thy people. O Lord! give Thy grace that this may increasingly be my unceasing life-work—in praying without ceasing to draw down the blessing of heaven on all my surroundings on earth.

Blessed Lord! I come now to accept this my calling. For this I would forsake all and follow Thee. Into Thy hands I would believingly yield my whole being: form, train, inspire me to be one of Thy prayer-legion, wrestlers who watch and strive in prayer, Israels, God’s princes, who have power and prevail. Take possession of my heart, and fill it with the one desire for the glory of God in the ingathering, and sanctification, and union of those whom the Father hath given Thee. Take my mind and let this be my study and my wisdom, to know when prayer can bring a blessing. Take me wholly and fit me as a priest ever to stand before God and to bless in His Name.

Blessed Lord! Be it here, as through all the spiritual life: Thou all, I nothing. And be it here my experience too that he that has and seeks nothing for himself, receives all, even to the wonderful grace of sharing with Thee in Thine everlasting ministry of intercession. Amen.

TWENTY-EIGHTH LESSON.

‘Father! Not what I will;’
Or, Christ the Sacrifice.

‘And He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee; remove this cup from me: howbeit not what I will, but what Thou wilt.’—Mark xiv. 36.

WHAT a contrast within the space of a few hours! What a transition from the quiet elevation of that, He lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, FATHER I WILL,’ to that falling on the ground and crying in agony. ‘My Father! Not what I will.’ In the one we see the High Priest within the veil in His all-prevailing intercession; in the other, the sacrifice on the altar opening the way through the rent veil. The high-priestly ‘Father! I will,’ in order of time precedes the sacrificial ‘Father! Not what I will;’ but this was only by anticipation, to show what the intercession would be when once the sacrifice was brought. In reality it was that prayer at the altar, ‘Father! Not what I will,’ in which the prayer before the throne, ‘Father! I will,’ had its origin and its power. It is from the entire surrender of His will in Gethsemane that the High Priest on the throne has the power to ask what He will, has the right to make His people share in that power too, and ask what they will.

For all who would learn to pray in the school of Jesus, this Gethsemane lesson is one of the most sacred and precious. To a superficial scholar it may appear to take away the courage to pray in faith. If even the earnest supplication of the Son was not heard, if even the Beloved had to say, ‘NOT WHAT I WILL!’ how much more do we need to speak so. And thus it appears impossible that the promises which the Lord had given only a few hours previously, ‘WHATSOEVER YE SHALL ASK,’ ‘WHATSOEVER YE WILL,’ could have been meant literally. A deeper insight into the meaning of Gethsemane would teach us that we have just here the sure ground and the open way to the assurance of an answer to our prayer. Let us draw nigh in reverent and adoring wonder, to gaze on this great sight—God’s Son thus offering up prayer and supplications with strong crying and tears, and not obtaining what He asks. He Himself is our Teacher, and will open up to us the mystery of His holy sacrifice, as revealed in this wondrous prayer.

To understand the prayer, let us note the infinite difference between what our Lord prayed a little ago as a Royal High Priest, and what He here supplicates in His weakness. There it was for the glorifying of the Father He prayed, and the glorifying of Himself and His people as the fulfilment of distinct promises that had been given Him. He asked what He knew to be according to the word and the will of the Father; He might boldly say, ‘FATHER! I WILL.’ Here He prays for something in regard to which the Father’s will is not yet clear to Him. As far as He knows, it is the Father’s will that He should drink the cup. He had told His disciples of the cup He must drink: a little later He would again say, ‘The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?’ It was for this He had come to this earth. But when, in the unutterable agony of soul that burst upon him as the power of darkness came upon Him, and He began to taste the first drops of death as the wrath of God against sin, His human nature, as it shuddered in presence of the awful reality of being made a curse, gave utterance in this cry of anguish, to its desire that, if God’s purpose could be accomplished without it, He might be spared the awful cup: ‘Let this cup pass from me.’ That desire was the evidence of the intense reality of His humanity. The ‘Not as I will’ kept that desire from being sinful: as He pleadingly cries, ‘All things are possible with Thee,’ and returns again to still more earnest prayer that the cup may be removed, it is His thrice-repeated ‘NOT WHAT I WILL’ that constitutes the very essence and worth of His sacrifice. He had asked for something of which He could not say: I know it is Thy will. He had pleaded God’s power and love, and had then withdrawn it in His final, ‘THY WILL BE DONE.’ The prayer that the cup should pass away could not be answered; the prayer of submission that God’s will be done was heard, and gloriously answered in His victory first over the fear, and then over the power of death.

It is in this denial of His will, this complete surrender of His will to the will of the Father, that Christ’s obedience reached its highest perfection. It is from the sacrifice of the will in Gethsemane that the sacrifice of the life on Calvary derives its value. It is here, as Scripture saith, that He learned obedience, and became the author of everlasting salvation to all that obey Him. It was because He there, in that prayer, became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, that God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him the power to ask what He will. It was in that ‘Father! Not what I will,’ that He obtained the power for that other ‘FATHER! I will.’ It was by Christ’s submittal in Gethsemane to have not His will done, that He secured for His people the right to say to them, ‘Ask whatsoever ye will.’

Let me look at them again, the deep mysteries that Gethsemane offers to my view. There is the first: the Father offers His Well-beloved the cup, the cup of wrath. The second: the Son, always so obedient, shrinks back, and implores that He may not have to drink it. The third: the Father does not grant the Son His request, but still gives the cup. And then the last: the Son yields His will, is

content that His will be not done, and goes out to Calvary to drink the cup. O Gethsemane! in thee I see how my Lord could give me such unlimited assurance of an answer to my prayers. As my surety He won it for me, by His consent to have His petition unanswered.

This is in harmony with the whole scheme of redemption. Our Lord always wins for us the opposite of what He suffered. He was bound that we might go free. He was made sin that we might become the righteousness of God. He died that we might live. He bore God’s curse that God’s blessing might be ours. He endured the not answering of His prayer, that our prayers might find an answer. Yea, He spake, ‘Not as I will,’ that He might say to us, ‘If ye abide in me, ask what ye will; it shall be done unto you.’

Yes, ‘If ye abide in me;’ here in Gethsemane the word acquires new force and depth. Christ is our Head, who as surety stands in our place, and bears what we must for ever have borne. We had deserved that God should turn a deaf ear to us, and never listen to our cry. Christ comes, and suffers this too for us: He suffers what we had merited; for our sins He suffers beneath the burden of that unanswered prayer. But now His suffering this avails for me: what He has borne is taken away for me; His merit has won for me the answer to every prayer, if I abide in Him.

Yes, in Him, as He bows there in Gethsemane, I must abide. As my Head, He not only once suffered for me, but ever lives in me, breathing and working His own disposition in me too. The Eternal Spirit, through which He offered Himself unto God, is the Spirit that dwells in me too, and makes me partaker of the very same obedience, and the sacrifice of the will unto God. That Spirit teaches me to yield my will entirely to the will of the Father, to give it up even unto the death, in Christ to be dead to it. Whatever is my own mind and thought and will, even though it be not directly sinful, He teaches me to fear and flee. He opens my ear to wait in great gentleness and teachableness of soul for what the Father has day by day to speak and to teach. He discovers to me how union with God’s will in the love of it is union with God Himself; how entire surrender to God’s will is the Father’s claim, the Son’s example, and the true blessedness of the soul. He leads my will into the fellowship of Christ’s death and resurrection, my will dies in Him, in Him to be made alive again. He breathes into it, as a renewed and quickened will, a holy insight into God’s perfect will, a holy joy in yielding itself to be an instrument of that will, a holy liberty and power to lay hold of God’s will to answer prayer. With my whole will I learn to live for the interests of God and His kingdom, to exercise the power of that will—crucified but risen again—in nature and in prayer, on earth and in heaven, with men and with God. The more deeply I enter into the ‘FATHER! NOT WHAT I WILL’ of Gethsemane, and into Him who spake it, to abide in Him, the fuller is my spiritual access into the power of His ‘FATHER! I WILL. And the soul experiences that it is the will, which has become nothing that God’s will may be all, which now becomes inspired with a Divine strength to really will what God wills, and to claim what has been promised it in the name of Christ.

O let us listen to Christ in Gethsemane, as He calls, ‘If ye abide in me, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.’ Being of one mind and spirit with Him in His giving up everything to God’s will, living like Him in obedience and surrender to the Father; this is abiding in Him; this is the secret of power in prayer.

‘LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

Blessed Lord Jesus! Gethsemane was Thy school, where Thou didst learn to pray and to obey. It is still Thy school, where Thou leadest all Thy disciples who would fain learn to obey and to pray even as Thou. Lord! teach me there to pray, in the faith that Thou has atoned for and conquered our self-will, and canst indeed give us grace to pray like Thee.

O Lamb of God! I would follow Thee to Gethsemane, there to become one with Thee, and to abide in Thee as Thou dost unto the very death yield Thy will unto the Father. With Thee, through Thee, in Thee, I do yield my will in absolute and entire surrender to the will of the Father. Conscious of my own weakness, and the secret power with which self-will would assert itself and again take its place on the throne, I claim in faith the power of Thy victory. Thou didst triumph over it and deliver me from it. In Thy death I would daily live; in Thy life I would daily die. Abiding in Thee, let my will, through the power of Thine eternal Spirit, only be the tuned instrument which yields to every touch of the will of my God. With my whole soul do I say with Thee and in Thee, ‘Father! Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.’

And then, Blessed Lord! Open my heart and that of all Thy people, to take in fully the glory of the truth, that a will given up to God is a will accepted of God to be used in his service, to desire, and purpose, and determine, and will what is according to God’s will. A will which, in the power of the Holy Spirit the indwelling God, is to exercise its royal prerogative in prayer, to loose and to bind in heaven and upon earth, to ask whatsoever it will, and to say it shall be done.

O Lord Jesus! teach me to pray. Amen.

TWENTY-NINTH LESSON.

'If we ask according to His will;
Or, Our Boldness in Prayer.

'And this is the boldness which we have toward Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us. And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of Him.'—I John v. 14, 15.

ONE of the greatest hindrances to believing prayer is with many undoubtedly this: they know not if what they ask is according to the will of God. As long as they are in doubt on this point, they cannot have the boldness to ask in the assurance that they certainly shall receive. And they soon begin to think that, if once they have made known their requests, and receive no answer, it is best to leave it to God to do according to His good pleasure. The words of John, 'If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us,' as they understand them, make certainty as to answer to prayer impossible, because they cannot be sure of what really may be the will of God. They think of God's will as His hidden counsel—how should man be able to fathom what really may be the purpose of the all-wise God.

This is the very opposite of what John aimed at in writing thus. He wished to rouse us to boldness, to confidence, to full assurance of faith in prayer. He says, 'This is the boldness which we have toward Him,' that we can say: Father! Thou knowest and I know that I ask according to Thy will: I know Thou hearest me. 'This is the boldness, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us.' On this account He adds at once: 'If we know that He heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know,' through this faith, that we have,' that we now while we pray receive 'the petition,' the special things, 'we have asked of Him.' John supposes that when we pray, we first find out if our prayers are according to the will of God. They may be according to God's will, and yet not come at once, or without the persevering prayer of faith. It is to give us courage thus to persevere and to be strong in faith, that He tells us: This gives us boldness or confidence in prayer, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us. It is evident that if it be a matter of uncertainty to us whether our petitions be according to His will, we cannot have the comfort of what he says, 'We know that we have the petitions which we have asked of Him.'

But just this is the difficulty. More than one believer says: 'I do not know if what I desire be according to the will of God. God's will is the purpose of His infinite wisdom: it is impossible for me to know whether He may not count something else better for me than what I desire, or may not have some reasons for withholding what I ask.' Every one feels how with such thoughts the prayer of faith, of which Jesus said, 'Whosoever shall believe that these things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith,' becomes an impossibility. There may be the prayer of submission, and of trust in God's wisdom; there cannot be the prayer of faith. The great mistake here is that God's children do not really believe that it is possible to know God's will. Or if they believe this, they do not take the time and trouble to find it out. What we need is to see clearly in what way it is that the Father leads His waiting, teachable child to know that his petition is according to His will.[1] It is through God's holy word, taken up and kept in the heart, the life, the will; and through God's Holy Spirit, accepted in His indwelling and leading, that we shall learn to know that our petitions are according to His will.

Through the word. There is a secret will of God, with which we often fear that our prayers may be at variance. It is not with this will of God, but His will as revealed in His word, that we have to do in prayer. Our notions of what the secret will may have decreed, and of how it might render the answers to our prayers impossible, are mostly very erroneous. Childlike faith as to what He is willing to do for His children, simply keeps to the Father's assurance, that it is His will to hear prayer and to do what faith in His word desires and accepts. In the word the Father has revealed in general promises the great principles of His will with His people. The child has to take the promise and apply it to the special circumstances in His life to which it has reference. Whatever he asks within the limits of that revealed will, he can know to be according to the will of God, and he may confidently expect. In His word, God has given us the revelation of His will and plans with us, with His people, and with the world, with the most precious promises of the grace and power with which through His people He will carry out His plans and do His work. As faith becomes strong and bold enough to claim the fulfilment of the general promise in the special case, we may have the assurance that our prayers are heard: they are according to God's will. Take the words of John in the verse following our text as an illustration: 'If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask and God will give him life.' Such is the general promise; and the believer who pleads on the ground of this promise, prays according to the will of God, and John would give him boldness to know that he has the petition which he asks.

But this apprehension of God's will is something spiritual, and must be spiritually discerned. It is not as a matter of logic that we can argue it out: God has said it; I must have it. Nor has every Christian the same gift or calling. While the general will revealed in the promise is the same for all, there is for each one a special different will according to God's purpose. And herein is the wisdom of the saints, to know this special will of God for each of us, according to the measure of grace given us, and so to ask in prayer just what God has prepared and made possible for each. It is to communicate this wisdom that the Holy Ghost dwells in us. The personal application of the general promises of the word to our special personal needs—it is for this that the leading of the Holy Spirit is given us.

It is this union of the teaching of the word and Spirit that many do not understand, and so there is a twofold difficulty in knowing what God's will may be. Some seek the will of God in an inner feeling or conviction, and would have the Spirit lead them without the word. Others seek it in the word, without the living leading of the Holy Spirit. The two must be united: only in the word, only in the Spirit, but in these most surely, can we know the will of God, and learn to pray according to it. In the heart the word and the Spirit must meet: it is only by indwelling that we can experience their teaching. The word must dwell, must abide in us: heart and life must day by day be under its influence. Not from without, but from within, comes the quickening of the word by the Spirit. It is only he who yields himself entirely in his whole life to the supremacy of the word and the will of God, who can expect in special cases to discern what that word and will permit him boldly to ask. And even as with the word, just so with the Spirit: if I would have the leading of the Spirit in prayer to assure me what God's will is, my whole life must be yielded to that leading; so only can mind and heart become spiritual and capable of knowing God's holy will. It is he who, through word and Spirit, lives in the will of God by doing it, who will know to pray according to that will in the confidence that He hears us.

Would that Christians might see what incalculable harm they do themselves by the thought that because possibly their prayer is not according to God's will, they must be content without an answer. God's word tells us that the great reason of unanswered prayer is that we do not pray aright: 'Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss.' In not granting an answer, the Father tells us that there is something wrong in our praying. He wants to teach us to find it out and confess it, and so to educate us to true believing and prevailing prayer. He can only attain His object when He brings us to see that we are to blame for the withholding of the answer; our aim, or our faith, or our life is not what it should be. But this purpose of God is frustrated as long as we are content to say: It is perhaps because my prayer is not according to His will that He does not hear me. O let us no longer throw the blame of our unanswered prayers on the secret will of God, but on our praying amiss. Let that word, 'Ye receive not because ye ask amiss,' be as the lantern of the Lord, searching heart and life to prove that we are indeed such as those to whom Christ gave His promises of certain answers. Let us believe that we can know if our prayer be according to God's will. Let us yield our heart to have the word of the Father dwell richly there, to have Christ's word abiding in us. Let us live day by day with the anointing which teacheth us all things. Let us yield ourselves unreservedly to the Holy Spirit as He teaches us to abide in Christ, to dwell in the Father's presence, and we shall soon understand how the Father's love longs that the child should know His will, and should, in the confidence that that will includes all that His power and love have promised to do, know too that He hears the petitions which we ask of Him. 'This is the boldness which we have, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us.'

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

Blessed Master! With my whole heart I thank Thee for this blessed lesson, that the path to a life full of answers to prayer is through the will of God. Lord! Teach me to know this blessed will by living it, loving it, and always doing it. So shall I learn to offer prayers according to that will, and to find in their harmony with God's blessed will, my boldness in prayer and my confidence in accepting the answer.

Father! it is Thy will that Thy child should enjoy Thy presence and blessing. It is Thy will that everything in the life of Thy child should be in accordance with Thy will, and that the Holy Spirit should work this in Him. It is Thy will that Thy child should live in the daily experience of distinct answers to prayer, so as to enjoy living and direct fellowship with Thyself. It is Thy will that Thy Name should be glorified in and through Thy children, and that it will be in those who trust Thee. O my Father! let this Thy will be my confidence in all I ask.

Blessed Saviour! Teach me to believe in the glory of this will. That will is the eternal love, which with Divine power works out its purpose in each human will that yields itself to it. Lord! Teach me this. Thou canst make me see how every promise and every command of the word is indeed the will of God, and that its fulfilment is secured to me by God Himself. Let thus the will of God become to me the sure rock on which my prayer and my assurance of an answer ever rest. Amen.

NOTE.

There is often great confusion as to the will of God. People think that what God wills must inevitably take place. This is by no means the case. God wills a great deal of blessing to His people, which never comes to them. He wills it most earnestly, but they do not will it, and it cannot come to them. This is the great mystery of man's creation with a free will, and also of the renewal of his will in redemption, that God has made the execution of His will, in many things, dependent on the will of man. Of God's will revealed in His promises, so much will be fulfilled as our faith accepts. Prayer is the power by which that comes to pass which otherwise would not take place. And faith, the power by which it is decided how much of God's will shall be done in us. When once God reveals to a soul what He is willing to do for it, the responsibility for the execution of that will rests with us.

Some are afraid that this is putting too much power into the hands of man. But all power is put into the hands of man in Christ Jesus. The key of all prayer and all power is His, and when we learn to understand that He is just as much with us as with the Father, and that we are also just as much one with Him as He with the Father, we shall see how natural and right and safe it is that to those who abide in Him as He in the Father, such power should be given. It is Christ the Son who has the right to ask what He will: it is through the abiding in Him and His abiding in us (in a Divine reality of which we have too little apprehension) that His Spirit breathes in us what He wants to ask and obtain through us. We pray in His Name: the prayers are really ours and as really His.

Others again fear that to believe that prayer has such power is limiting the liberty and the love of God. O if we only knew how we are limiting His liberty and His love by not allowing Him to act in the only way in which He chooses to act, now that He has taken us up into fellowship with himself—through our prayers and our faith. A brother in the ministry once asked, as we were speaking on this subject, whether there was not a danger of our thinking that our love to souls and our willingness to see them blessed were to move God's love and God's willingness to bless them. We were just passing some large water-pipes, by which water was being carried over hill and dale from a large mountain stream to a town at some distance. Just look at these pipes, was the answer; they did not make the water willing to flow downwards from the hills, nor did they give it its power of blessing and refreshment: this is its very nature. All that they could do is to decide its direction: by it the inhabitants of the town said they want the blessing there. And just so, it is the very nature of God to love and to bless. Downward and ever downward His love longs to come with its quickening and refreshing streams. But He has left it to prayer to say where the blessing is to come. He has committed it to His believing people to bring the living water to the desert places: the will of God to bless is dependent upon the will of man to say where the blessing must descend. 'Such honour have His saints.' 'And this is the boldness which we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us. And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of Him.'

1 See this illustrated in the extracts from George Muller at the end of this volume.

THIRTIETH LESSON.

‘An holy priesthood;’
Or, The Ministry of Intercession.

‘An holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.’—I Peter ii. 5.
‘Ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord.’—Isaiah lxi. 6.

‘THE Spirit of the Lord God is upon me: because the Lord hath anointed me.’ These are the words of Jesus in Isaiah. As the fruit of His work all redeemed ones are priests, fellow-partakers with Him of His anointing with the Spirit as High Priest. ‘Like the precious ointment upon the beard of Aaron, that went down to the skirts of his garments.’ As every son of Aaron, so every member of Jesus’ body has a right to the priesthood. But not every one exercises it: many are still entirely ignorant of it. And yet it is the highest privilege of a child of God, the mark of greatest nearness and likeness to Him, ‘who ever liveth to pray.’ Do you doubt if this really be so? Think of what constitutes priesthood. There is, first, the work of the priesthood. This has two sides, one Godward, the other manward. ‘Every priest is ordained for men in things pertaining to God’ (Heb. v. 1); or, as it is said by Moses (Deut. x. 8, see also xxi. 5, xxxiii. 10; Mal. ii. 6): ‘The Lord separated the tribe of Levi, to stand before the Lord to minister unto Him, and to bless His Name.’ On the one hand, the priest had the power to draw nigh to God, to dwell with Him in His house, and to present before Him the blood of the sacrifice or the burning incense. This work he did not do, however, on his own behalf, but for the sake of the people whose representative he was. This is the other side of his work. He received from the people their sacrifices, presented them before God, and then came out to bless in His Name, to give the assurance of His favour and to teach them His law.

A priest is thus a man who does not at all live for himself. He lives with God and for God. His work is as God’s servant to care for His house, His honour, and His worship, to make known to men His love and His will. He lives with men and for men (Heb. v. 2). His work is to find out their sin and need, and to bring it before God, to offer sacrifice and incense in their name, to obtain forgiveness and blessing for them, and then to come out and bless them in His Name. This is the high calling of every believer. ‘Such honour have all His saints.’ They have been redeemed with the one purpose to be in the midst of the perishing millions around them, God’s priests, who in conformity to Jesus, the Great High Priest, are to be the ministers and stewards of the grace of God to all around them.

And then there is the walk of the priesthood, in harmony with its work. As God is holy, so the priest was to be especially holy. This means not only separated from everything unclean, but holy unto God, being set apart and given up to God for His disposal. The separation from the world and setting apart unto God was indicated in many ways.

It was seen in the clothing: the holy garments, made after God’s own order, marked them as His (Ex. xxviii.). It was seen in the command as to their special purity and freedom from all contact from death and defilement (Lev. xi. 22). Much that was allowed to an ordinary Israelite was forbidden to them. It was seen in the injunction that the priest must have no bodily defect or blemish; bodily perfection was to be the type of wholeness and holiness in God’s service. And it was seen in the arrangement by which the priestly tribes were to have no inheritance with the other tribes; God was to be their inheritance. Their life was to be one of faith: set apart unto God, they were to live on Him as well as for Him.

All this is the emblem of what the character of the New Testament priest is to be. Our priestly power with God depends on our personal life and walk. We must be of them of whose walk on earth Jesus says, ‘They have not defiled their garments.’

In the surrender of what may appear lawful to others in our separation from the world, we must prove that our consecration to be holy to the Lord is whole-hearted and entire. The bodily perfection of the priest must have its counterpart in our too being ‘without spot or blemish;’ ‘the man of God perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works,’ ‘perfect and entire, wanting nothing’ (Lev. xxi. 17-21; Eph. v. 27; 2 Tim. ii. 7; Jas. i. 4). And above all, we consent to give up all inheritance on earth; to forsake all, and like Christ to have only God as our portion: to possess as not possessing, and hold all for God alone: it is this marks the true priest, the man who only lives for God and his fellow-men.

And now the way to the priesthood. In Aaron God had chosen all his sons to be priests: each of them was a priest by birth. And yet he could not enter upon his work without a special act of ordinance—his consecration. Every child of God is priest in light of his birth, his blood relationship to the Great High Priest; but this is not enough: he will exercise his power only as he accepts and

realizes his consecration.

With Aaron and his sons it took place thus (Ex. xxix.): After being washed and clothed, they were anointed with the holy oil. Sacrifices were then offered, and with the blood the right ear, the right hand, and the right foot were touched. And then they and their garments were once again sprinkled with the blood and the oil together. And so it is as the child of God enters more fully into what THE BLOOD and THE SPIRIT of which he already is partaker, are to him, that the power of the Holy Priesthood will work in him. The blood will take away all sense of unworthiness; the Spirit, all sense of unfitness.

Let us notice what there was new in the application of the blood to the priest. If ever he had as a penitent brought a sacrifice for his sin, seeking forgiveness, the blood was sprinkled on the altar, but not on his person. But now, for priestly consecration, there was to be closer contact with the blood; ear and hand and foot were by a special act brought under its power, and the whole being taken possession of and sanctified for God. And so, when the believer, who had been content to think chiefly of the blood sprinkled on the mercy-seat as what he needs for pardon, is led to seek full priestly access to God, he feels the need of a fuller and more abiding experience of the power of the blood, as really sprinkling and cleansing the heart from an evil conscience, so that he has 'no more conscience of sin' (Heb. x. 2) as cleansing from all sin. And it is as he gets to enjoy this, that the consciousness is awakened of his wonderful right of most intimate access to God, and of the full assurance that his intercessions are acceptable.

And as the blood gives the right, the Spirit gives the power, and fits for believing intercession. He breathes into us the priestly spirit —burning love for God's honour and the saving of souls. He makes us so one with Jesus that prayer in His Name is a reality. He strengthens us to believing, importunate prayer. The more the Christian is truly filled with the Spirit of Christ, the more spontaneous will be his giving himself up to the life of priestly intercession. Beloved fellow-Christians! God needs, greatly needs, priests who can draw near to Him, who live in His presence, and by their intercession draw down the blessings of His grace on others. And the world needs, greatly needs, priests who will bear the burden of the perishing ones, and intercede on their behalf.

Are you willing to offer yourself for this holy work? You know the surrender it demands—nothing less than the Christ-like giving up of all, that the saving purposes of God's love may be accomplished among men. Oh, be no longer of those who are content if they have salvation, and just do work enough to keep themselves warm and lively. O let nothing keep you back from giving yourselves to be wholly and only priests—nothing else, nothing less than the priests of the Most High God. The thought of unworthiness, of unfitness, need not keep you back. In the Blood, the objective power of the perfect redemption works in you: in the Spirit its full subjective personal experience as a divine life is secured. The Blood provides an infinite worthiness to make your prayers most acceptable: The Spirit provides a Divine fitness, teaching you to pray just according to the will of God. Every priest knew that when he presented a sacrifice according to the law of the sanctuary, it was accepted: under the covering of the Blood and Spirit you have the assurance that all the wonderful promises to prayer in the Name of Jesus will be fulfilled in you. Abiding in union with the Great High Priest, 'you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.' You will have power to pray the effectual prayer of the righteous man that availeth much. You will not only join in the general prayer of the Church for the world, but be able in your own sphere to take up your special work in prayer—as priests, to transact it with God, to receive and know the answer, and so to bless in His Name. Come, brother, come, and be a priest, only priest, all priest. Seek now to walk before the Lord in the full consciousness that you have been set apart for the holy Ministry of Intercession. This is the true blessedness of conformity to the image of God's Son.

'LORD TEACH US TO PRAY.'

O Thou my blessed High Priest, accept the consecration in which my soul now would respond to Thy message.

I believe in the HOLY PRIESTHOOD OF THY SAINTS, and that I too am a priest, with power to appear before the Father, and in the prayer that avails much bring down blessing on the perishing around me.

I believe in the POWER OF THY PRECIOUS BLOOD to cleanse from all sin, to give me perfect confidence toward God, and bring me near in the full assurance of faith that my intercession will be heard.

I believe in the ANOINTING OF THE SPIRIT, coming down daily from Thee, my Great High Priest, to sanctify me, to fill me with the consciousness of my priestly calling, and with love to souls, to teach me what is according to God's will, and how to pray the prayer of faith.

I believe that, as Thou my Lord Jesus art Thyself in all things my life, so Thou, too, art THE SURETY FOR MY PRAYER-LIFE,

and wilt Thyself draw me up into the fellowship of Thy wondrous work of intercession.

In this faith I yield myself this day to my God, as one of His anointed priests, to stand before His face to intercede in behalf of sinners, and to come out and bless in His Name.

Holy Lord Jesus! accept and seal my consecration. Yea, Lord, do Thou lay Thy hands on me, and Thyself consecrate me to this Thy holy work. And let me walk among men with the consciousness and the character of a priest of the Most High God.

Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins IN HIS OWN BLOOD, AND HATH MADE US kings and priests unto God and His Father; TO HIM be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen

THIRTY-FIRST LESSON.

‘Pray without ceasing;’
Or, A Life of Prayer.

‘Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks.—I Thess. v. 16, 17, 18.

OUR Lord spake the parable of the widow and the unjust judge to teach us that men ought to pray always and not faint. As the widow persevered in seeking one definite thing, the parable appears to have reference to persevering prayer for some one blessing, when God delays or appears to refuse. The words in the Epistles, which speak of continuing instant in prayer, continuing in prayer and watching in the same, of praying always in the Spirit, appear more to refer to the whole life being one of prayer. As the soul is filling with the longing for the manifestation of God’s glory to us and in us, through us and around us, and with the confidence that He hears the prayers of His children; the inmost life of the soul is continually rising upward in dependence and faith, in longing desire and trustful expectation.

At the close of our meditations it will not be difficult to say what is needed to live such a life of prayer. The first thing is undoubtedly the entire sacrifice of the life to God’s kingdom and glory. He who seeks to pray without ceasing because he wants to be very pious and good, will never attain to it. It is the forgetting of self and yielding ourselves to live for God and His honour that enlarges the heart, that teaches us to regard everything in the light of God and His will, and that instinctively recognises in everything around us the need of God’s help and blessing, an opportunity for His being glorified. Because everything is weighed and tested by the one thing that fills the heart—the glory of God, and because the soul has learnt that only what is of God can really be to Him and His glory, the whole life becomes a looking up, a crying from the inmost heart, for God to prove His power and love and so show forth His glory. The believer awakes to the consciousness that he is one of the watchmen on Zion’s walls, one of the Lord’s remembrancers, whose call does really touch and move the King in heaven to do what would otherwise not be done. He understands how real Paul’s exhortation was, ‘praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit for all the saints and for me,’ and ‘continue in prayer, withal praying also for us.’ To forget oneself, to live for God and His kingdom among men, is the way to learn to pray without ceasing.

This life devoted to God must be accompanied by the deep confidence that our prayer is effectual. We have seen how our Blessed Lord insisted upon nothing so much in His prayer-lessons as faith in the Father as a God who most certainly does what we ask. ‘Ask and ye shall receive;’ count confidently on an answer, is with Him the beginning and the end of His teaching (compare Matt. vii. 8 and John xvi. 24). In proportion as this assurance masters us, and it becomes a settled thing that our prayers do tell and that God does what we ask, we dare not neglect the use of this wonderful power: the soul turns wholly to God, and our life becomes prayer. We see that the Lord needs and takes time, because we and all around us are the creatures of time, under the law of growth; but knowing that not one single prayer of faith can possibly be lost that there is sometimes a needs-be for the storing up and accumulating of prayer, that persevering pray is irresistible, prayer becomes the quiet, persistent living of our life of desire and faith in the presence of our God. O do not let us any longer by our reasonings limit and enfeeble such free and sure promises of the living God, robbing them of their power, and ourselves of the wonderful confidence they are meant to inspire. Not in God, not in His secret will, not in the limitations of His promises, but in us, in ourselves is the hindrance; we are not what we should be to obtain the promise. Let us open our whole heart to God’s words of promise in all their simplicity and truth: they will search us and humble us; they will lift us up and make us glad and strong. And to the faith that knows it gets what it asks, prayer is not a work or a burden, but a joy and a triumph; it becomes a necessity and a second nature.

This union of strong desire and firm confidence again is nothing but the life of the Holy Spirit within us. The Holy Spirit dwells in us, hides Himself in the depths of our being, and stirs the desire after the Unseen and the Divine, after God Himself. Now in groanings that cannot be uttered, then in clear and conscious assurance; now in special distinct petitions for the deeper revelation of Christ to ourselves, then in pleadings for a soul, a work, the Church or the world, it is always and alone the Holy Spirit who draws out the heart to thirst for God, to long for His being made known and glorified. Where the child of God really lives and walks in the Spirit, where he is not content to remain carnal, but seeks to be spiritual, in everything a fit organ for the Divine Spirit to reveal the life of Christ and Christ Himself, there the never-ceasing intercession-life of the Blessed Son cannot but reveal and repeat itself in our experience. Because it is the Spirit of Christ who prays in us, our prayer must be heard; because it is we who pray in the Spirit, there is need of time, and patience, and continual renewing of the prayer, until every obstacle be conquered, and the harmony between God’s Spirit and ours is perfect.

But the chief thing we need for such a life of unceasing prayer is, to know that Jesus teaches us to pray. We have begun to understand a little what His teaching is. Not the communication of new thoughts or views, not the discovery of failure or error, not the stirring up of desire and faith, of however much importance all this be, but the taking us up into the fellowship of His own prayer-life before the Father—this it is by which Jesus really teaches. It was the sight of the praying Jesus that made the disciples long and ask to be taught to pray. It is the faith of the ever-praying Jesus, whose alone is the power to pray, that teaches us truly to pray. We know why: He who prays is our Head and our Life. All He has is ours and is given to us when we give ourselves all to Him. By His blood He leads us into the immediate presence of God. The inner sanctuary is our home, we dwell there. And He that lives so near God, and knows that He has been brought near to bless those who are far, cannot but pray. Christ makes us partakers with Himself of His prayer-power and prayer-life. We understand then that our true aim must not be to work much and have prayer enough to keep the work right, but to pray much and then to work enough for the power and blessing obtained in prayer to find its way through us to men. It is Christ who ever lives to pray, who saves and reigns. He communicates His prayer-life to us: He maintains it in us if we trust Him. He is surety for our praying without ceasing. Yes, Christ teaches to pray by showing how He does it, by doing it in us, by leading us to do it in Him and like Him. Christ is all, the life and the strength too for a never-ceasing prayer-life.

It is the sight of this, the sight of the ever-praying Christ as our life, that enables us to pray without ceasing. Because His priesthood is the power of an endless life, that resurrection-life that never fades and never fails, and because His life is our life, praying without ceasing can become to us nothing less than the life-joy of heaven. So the Apostle says: ‘Rejoice evermore; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks.’ Borne up between the never-ceasing joy and the never-ceasing praise, never-ceasing prayer is the manifestation of the power of the eternal life, where Jesus always prays. The union between the Vine and the branch is in very deed a prayer-union. The highest conformity to Christ, the most blessed participation in the glory of His heavenly life, is that we take part in His work of intercession: He and we live ever to pray. In the experience of our union with Him, praying without ceasing becomes a possibility, a reality, the holiest and most blessed part of our holy and blessed fellowship with God. We have our abode within the veil, in the presence of the Father. What the Father says, we do; what the Son says, the Father does. Praying without ceasing is the earthly manifestation of heaven come down to us, the foretaste of the life where they rest not day or night in the song of worship and adoration.

‘LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.’

O my Father, with my whole heart do I praise Thee for this wondrous life of never-ceasing prayer, never-ceasing fellowship, never-ceasing answers, and never-ceasing experience of my oneness with Him who ever lives to pray. O my God! keep me ever so dwelling and walking in the presence of Thy glory, that prayer may be the spontaneous expression of my life with Thee.

Blessed Saviour! with my whole heart I praise Thee that Thou didst come from heaven to share with me in my needs and cries, that I might share with Thee in Thy all-prevailing intercession. And I thank Thee that Thou hast taken me into the school of prayer, to teach the blessedness and the power of a life that is all prayer. And most of all, that Thou hast taken me up into the fellowship of Thy life of intercession, that through me too Thy blessings may be dispensed to those around me.

Holy Spirit! with deep reverence I thank Thee for Thy work in me. It is through Thee I am lifted up into a share in the intercourse between the Son and the Father, and enter so into the fellowship of the life and love of the Holy Trinity Spirit of God! perfect Thy work in me; bring me into perfect union with Christ my Intercessor. Let Thine unceasing indwelling make my life one of unceasing intercession. And let so my life become one that is unceasingly to the glory of the Father and to the blessing of those around me. Amen.

GEORGE MULLER,

AND THE SECRET OF HIS POWER IN PRAYER

WHEN God wishes anew to teach His Church a truth that is not being understood or practised, He mostly does so by raising some man to be in word and deed a living witness to its blessedness. And so God has raised up in this nineteenth century, among others, George Muller to be His witness that He is indeed the Hearer of prayer. I know of no way in which the principal truths of God's word in regard to prayer can be more effectually illustrated and established than a short review of his life and of what he tells of his prayer-experiences.

He was born in Prussia on 25th September 1805, and is thus now eighty years of age. His early life, even after having entered the University of Halle as a theological student, was wicked in the extreme. Led by a friend one evening, when just twenty years of age, to a prayer meeting, he was deeply impressed, and soon after brought to know the Saviour. Not long after he began reading missionary papers, and in course of time offered himself to the London Society for promoting Christianity to the Jews. He was accepted as a student, but soon found that he could not in all things submit to the rules of the Society, as leaving too little liberty for the leading of the Holy Spirit. The connection was dissolved in 1830 by mutual consent, and he became the pastor of a small congregation at Teignmouth. In 1832 he was led to Bristol, and it was as pastor of Bethesda Chapel that he was led to the Orphan Home and other work, in connection with which God has so remarkably led him to trust His word and to experience how God fulfils that word.

A few extracts in regard to his spiritual life will prepare the way for what we specially wish to quote of his experiences in reference to prayer.

'In connection with this I would mention, that the Lord very graciously gave me, from the very commencement of my divine life, a measure of simplicity and of childlike disposition in spiritual things, so that whilst I was exceedingly ignorant of the Scriptures, and was still from time to time overcome even by outward sins, yet I was enabled to carry most minute matters to the Lord in prayer. And I have found "godliness profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Though very weak and ignorant, yet I had now, by the grace of God, some desire to benefit others, and he who so faithfully had once served Satan, sought now to win souls for Christ.'

It was at Teignmouth that he was led to know how to use God's word , and to trust the Holy Spirit as the Teacher given by God to make that word clear. He writes:—

'God then began to show me that the word of God alone is our standard of judgment in spiritual things; that it can be explained only by the Holy Spirit; and that in our day, as well as in former times. He is the Teacher of His people. The office of the Holy Spirit I had not experimentally understood before that time.

'It was my beginning to understand this latter point in particular, which had a great effect on me; for the Lord enabled me to put it to the test of experience, by laying aside commentaries, and almost every other book and simply reading the word of God and studying it.

'The result of this was, that the first evening that I shut myself into my room, to give myself to prayer and meditation over the Scriptures, I learned more in a few hours than I had done during a period of several months previously.

'But the particular difference was that I received real strength for my soul in so doing. I now began to try by the test of the Scriptures the things which I had learned and seen, and found that only those principles which stood the test were of real value.'

Of obedience to the word of God, he writes as follows, in connection with his being baptized:—

'It had pleased God, in His abundant mercy, to bring my mind into such a state, that I was willing to carry out into my life whatever I should find in the Scriptures. I could say, "I will do His will," and it was on that account, I believe, that I saw which "doctrine is of God."—And I would observe here, by the way, that the passage to which I have just alluded (John vii. 17) has been a most remarkable comment to me on many doctrines and precepts of our most holy faith. For instance: "Resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from

him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matt. v. 39-44). "Sell that ye have, and give alms"(Luke xii. 33). "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another"(Rom. xii. 8). It may be said, "Surely these passages cannot be taken literally, for how then would the people of God be able to pass through the world?" The state of mind enjoined in John vii. 17 will cause such objections to vanish. WHOSOEVER IS WILLING TO ACT OUT these commandments of the Lord LITERALLY, will, I believe, be led with me to see that to take them LITERALLY is the will of God.—Those who do so take them will doubtless often be brought into difficulties, hard to the flesh to bear, but these will have a tendency to make them constantly feel that they are strangers and pilgrims here, that this world is not their home, and thus to throw them more upon God, who will assuredly help us through any difficulty into which we may be brought by seeking to act in obedience to His word.'

This implicit surrender to God's word led him to certain views and conduct in regard to money, which mightily influenced his future life. They had their root in the conviction that money was a Divine stewardship, and that all money had therefore to be received and dispensed in direct fellowship with God Himself. This led him to the adoption of the following four great rules: 1. Not to receive any fixed salary, both because in the collecting of it there was often much that was at variance with the freewill offering with which God's service is to be maintained, and in the receiving of it a danger of placing more dependence on human sources of income than in the living God Himself. 2. Never to ask any human being for help, however great the need might be, but to make his wants known to the God who has promised to care for His servants and to hear their prayer. 3. To take this command (Luke xii. 33) literally, 'Sell that thou hast and give alms,' and never to save up money, but to spend all God entrusted to him on God's poor, on the work of His kingdom. 4. Also to take Rom. xiii. 8, 'Owe no man anything,' literally, and never to buy on credit, or be in debt for anything, but to trust God to provide.

This mode of living was not easy at first. But Muller testifies it was most blessed in bringing the soul to rest in God, and drawing it into closer union with Himself when inclined to backslide. 'For it will not do, it is not possible, to live in sin, and at the same time, by communion with God, to draw down from heaven everything one needs for the life that now is.'

Not long after his settlement at Bristol, 'THE SCRIPTURAL KNOWLEDGE INSTITUTION FOR HOME AND ABROAD' was established for aiding in Day, Sunday School, Mission and Bible work. Of this Institution the Orphan Home work, by which Mr. Muller is best known, became a branch. It was in 1834 that his heart was touched by the case of an orphan brought to Christ in one of the schools, but who had to go to a poorhouse where its spiritual wants would not be cared for. Meeting shortly after with a life of Franke, he writes (Nov, 20, 1835): 'Today I have had it very much laid on my heart no longer merely to think about the establishment of an Orphan Home, but actually to set about it, and I have been very much in prayer respecting it, in order to ascertain the Lord's mind. May God make it plain.' And again, Nov. 25: 'I have been again much in prayer yesterday and today about the Orphan Home, and am more and more convinced that it is of God. May He in mercy guide me. The three chief reasons are —1. That God may be glorified, should He be pleased to furnish me with the means, in its being seen that it is not a vain thing to trust Him; and that thus the faith of His children may be strengthened. 2. The spiritual welfare of fatherless and motherless children. 3. Their temporal welfare.'

After some months of prayer and waiting on God, a house was rented, with room for thirty children , and in course of time three more, containing in all 120 children. The work was carried on it this way for ten years, the supplies for the needs of the orphans being asked and received of God alone. It was often a time of sore need and much prayer, but a trial of faith more precious than of gold was found unto praise and honour and glory of God. The Lord was preparing His servant for greater things. By His providence and His Holy Spirit, Mr. Muller was led to desire, and to wait upon God till he received from Him, the sure promise of £15,000 for a Home to contain 300 children. This first Home was opened in 1849. In 1858, a second and third Home, for 950 more orphans, was opened, costing £35,000. And in 1869 and 1870, a fourth and a fifth Home, for 850 more, at an expense of £50,000, making the total number of the orphans 2100.

In addition to this work, God has given him almost as much as for the building of the Orphan Homes, and the maintenance of the orphans, for other work, the support of schools and missions, Bible and tract circulation. In all he has received from God, to be spent in His work, during these fifty years, more than one million pounds sterling. How little he knew, let us carefully notice, that when he gave up his little salary of £35 a year in obedience to the leading of God's word and the Holy Spirit, what God was preparing to give him as the reward of obedience and faith; and how wonderfully the word was to be fulfilled to him: 'Thou hast been faithful over few things; I will set thee over many things.'

And these things have happened for an ensample to us. God calls us to be followers of George Muller, even as he is of Christ. His God is our God; the same promises are for us; the same service of love and faith in which he laboured is calling for us on every side. Let us in connection with our lessons in the school of prayer study the way in which God gave George Muller such power as a man

of prayer: we shall find in it the most remarkable illustration of some of the lessons which we have been studying with the bl word. We shall specially have impressed upon us His first great lesson, that if we will come to Him in the way He has pointed out, with definite petitions, made known to us by the Spirit through the word as being according to the will of God, we may most confidently believe that whatsoever we ask it shall be done.

PRAYER AND THE WORD OF GOD.

We have more than once seen that God's listening to our voice depends upon our listening to His voice. (See Lessons 22 and 23.) We must not only have a special promise to plead, when we make a special request, but our whole life must be under the supremacy of the word: the word must be dwelling in us. The testimony of George Muller on this point is most instructive. He tells us how the discovery of the true place of the word of God, and the teaching of the Spirit with it, was the commencement of a new era in his spiritual life. Of it he writes:—

'Now the scriptural way of reasoning would have been: God Himself has condescended to become an author, and I am ignorant about that precious book which His Holy Spirit has caused to be written through the instrumentality of His servants, and it contains that which I ought to know, and the knowledge of which will lead me to true happiness; therefore I ought to read again and again this most precious book, this book of books, most earnestly, most prayerfully, and with much meditation; and in this practice I ought to continue all the days of my life. For I was aware, though I read it but little, that I knew scarcely anything of it. But instead of acting thus and being led by my ignorance of the word of God to study it more, my difficulty in understanding it, and the little enjoyment I had in it, made me careless of reading it (for much prayerful reading of the word gives not merely more knowledge, but increases the delight we have in reading it); and thus, like many believers, I practically preferred, for the first four years of my divine life, the works of uninspired men to the oracles of the living God. The consequence was that I remained a babe, both in knowledge and grace. In knowledge, I say; for all true knowledge must be derived, by the Spirit, from the word. And as I neglected the word, I was for nearly four years so ignorant, that I did not clearly know even the fundamental points of our holy faith. And this lack of knowledge most sadly kept me back from walking steadily in the ways of God. For when it pleased the Lord in August 1829 to bring me really to the Scriptures, my life and walk became very different. And though ever since that I have very much fallen short of what I might and ought to be, yet by the grace of God I have been enabled to live much nearer to Him than before. If any believers read this who practically prefer other books to the Holy Scriptures, and who enjoy the writings of men much more than the word of God, may they be warned by my loss. I shall consider this book to have been the means of doing much good, should it please the Lord, through its instrumentality, to lead some of His people no longer to neglect the Holy Scriptures, but to give them that preference which they have hitherto bestowed on the writings of men.

'Before I leave this subject, I would only add: If the reader understands very little of the word of God, he ought to read it very much; for the Spirit explains the word by the word. And if he enjoys the reading of the word little, that is just the reason why he should read it much; for the frequent reading of the Scriptures creates a delight in them, so that the more we read them, the more we desire to do so.

'Above all, he should seek to have it settled in his own mind that God alone by His Spirit can teach him, and that therefore, as God will be inquired of for blessings, it becomes him to seek God's blessing previous to reading, and also whilst reading.

'He should have it, moreover, settled in his mind that although the Holy Spirit is the best and sufficient Teacher, yet that this Teacher does not always teach immediately when we desire it, and that therefore we may have to entreat Him again and again for the explanation of certain passages; but that He will surely teach us at last, if indeed we are seeking for light prayerfully, patiently, and with a view to the glory of God.' 4

We find in his journal frequent mention made of his spending two and three hours in prayer over the word for the feeding of his spiritual life. As the fruit of this, when he had need of strength and encouragement in prayer, the individual promises were not to him so many arguments from a book to be used with God, but living words which he had heard the Father's living voice speak to him, and which he could now bring to the Father in living faith.

PRAYER AND THE WILL OF GOD.

One of the greatest difficulties with young believers is to know how they can find out whether what they desire is according to God's will. I count it one of the most precious lessons God wants to teach through the experience of George Muller, that He is willing to make know, of things of which His word says nothing directly, that they are His will for us, and that we may ask them. The teaching

of the Spirit, not without or against the word, but as something above and beyond it, in addition to it, without which we cannot see God’s will, is the heritage of every believer. It is through THE WORD, AND THE WORD ALONE, that the Spirit teaches, applying the general principles or promises to our special need. And it is THE SPIRIT, AND THE SPIRIT ALONE, who can really make the word a light on our path, whether the path of duty in our daily walk, or the path of faith in our approach to God. Let us try and notice in what childlike simplicity and teachableness it was that the discovery of God’s will was so surely and so clearly made known to His servant.

With regard to the building of the first Home and the assurance he had of its being God’s will, he writes in May 1850, just after it had been opened, speaking of the great difficulties there were, and how little likely it appeared to nature that they would be removed: ‘But while the prospect before me would have been overwhelming had I looked at it naturally, I was never even for once permitted to question how it would end. For as from the beginning I was sure it was the will of God that I should go to the work of building for Him this large Orphan Home, so also from the beginning I was as certain that the whole would be finished as if the Home had been already filled.’

The way in which he found out what was God’s will, comes out with special clearness in his account of the building of the second Home; and I ask the reader to study with care the lesson the narrative conveys:—

‘Dec. 5, 1850.—Under these circumstances I can only pray that the Lord in His tender mercy would not allow Satan to gain an advantage over me. By the grace of God my heart says: Lord, if I could be sure that it is Thy will that I should go forward in this matter, I would do so cheerfully; and, on the other hand, if I could be sure that these are vain, foolish, proud thoughts, that they are not from Thee, I would, by Thy grace, hate them, and entirely put them aside.

‘My hope is in God: He will help and teach me. Judging, however, from His former dealings with me, it would not be a strange thing to me, nor surprising, if He called me to labour yet still more largely in this way.

‘The thoughts about enlarging the Orphan work have not yet arisen on account of an abundance of money having lately come in; for I have had of late to wait for about seven weeks upon God, whilst little, very little comparatively, came in, i.e. about four times as much was going out as came in; and, had not the Lord previously sent me large sums, we should have been distressed indeed.

‘Lord! how can Thy servant know Thy will in this matter? Wilt Thou be pleased to teach him!

December 11.—During the last six days, since writing the above, I have been, day after day, waiting upon God concerning this matter. It has generally been more or less all the day on my heart. When I have been awake at night, it has not been far from my thoughts. Yet all this without the least excitement. I am perfectly calm and quiet respecting it. My soul would be rejoiced to go forward in this service, could I be sure that the Lord would have me to do so; for then, notwithstanding the numberless difficulties, all would be well; and His Name would be magnified.

‘On the other hand, were I assured that the Lord would have me to be satisfied with my present sphere of service, and that I should not pray about enlarging the work, by His grace I could, without an effort, cheerfully yield to it; for He has brought me into such a state of heart, that I only desire to please Him in this matter. Moreover, hitherto I have not spoken about this thing even to my beloved wife, the sharer of my joys, sorrows, and labours for more than twenty years; nor is it likely that I shall do so for some time to come: for I prefer quietly to wait on the Lord, without conversing on this subject, in order that thus I may be kept the more easily, by His blessing, from being influenced by things from without. The burden of my prayer concerning this matter is, that the Lord would not allow me to make a mistake, and that He would teach me to do His will.

‘December 26.—Fifteen days have elapsed since I wrote the preceding paragraph. Every day since then I have continued to pray about this matter, and that with a goodly measure of earnestness, by the help of God. There has passed scarcely an hour during these days, in which, whilst awake, this matter has not been more or less before me. But all without even a shadow of excitement. I converse with no one about it. Hitherto have I not even done so with my dear wife. For this I refrain still, and deal with God alone about the matter, in order that no outward influence and no outward excitement may keep me from attaining unto a clear discovery of His will. I have the fullest and most peaceful assurance that He will clearly show me His will. This evening I have had again an especial solemn season for prayer, to seek to know the will of God. But whilst I continue to entreat and beseech the Lord, that He would not allow me to be deluded in this business, I may say I have scarcely any doubt remaining on my mind as to what will be the issue, even that I should go forward in this matter. As this, however, is one of the most momentous steps that I have ever taken, I judge that I cannot go about this matter with too much caution, prayerfulness, and deliberation. I am in no hurry about it. I could wait for years, by God’s grace, were this His will, before even taking one single step toward this thing, or even speaking to anyone about it; and, on the other hand, I would set to work tomorrow, were the Lord to bid me do so. This calmness of mind, this having no

will of my own in the matter, this only wishing to please my Heavenly Father in it, this only seeking His and not my honour in it; this state of heart, I say, is the fullest assurance to me that my heart is not under a fleshly excitement, and that, if I am helped thus to go on, I shall know the will of God to the full. But, while I write this, I cannot but add at the same time, that I do crave the honour and the glorious privilege to be more and more used by the Lord.

'I desire to be allowed to provide scriptural instruction for a thousand orphans, instead of doing so for 300. I desire to expound the Holy Scriptures regularly to a thousand orphans, instead of doing so to 300. I desire that it may be yet more abundantly manifest that God is still the Hearer and Answerer of prayer, and that He is the living God now as He ever was and ever will be, when He shall simply, in answer to prayer, have condescended to provide me with a house for 700 orphans and with means to support them. This last consideration is the most important point in my mind. The Lord's honour is the principal point with me in this whole matter; and just because this is the case, if He would be more glorified by not going forward in this business, I should by His grace be perfectly content to give up all thoughts about another Orphan House. Surely in such a state of mind, obtained by the Holy Spirit, Thou, O my Heavenly Father, wilt not suffer Thy child to be mistaken, much less deluded. By the help of God I shall continue further day by day to wait upon Him in prayer, concerning this thing, till He shall bid me act.

'Jan. 2, 1851.—A week ago I wrote the preceding paragraph. During this week I have still been helped day by day, and more than once every day, to seek the guidance of the Lord about another Orphan House. The burden of my prayer has still been, that He in His great mercy would keep me from making a mistake. During the last week the book of Proverbs has come in the course of my Scripture reading, and my heart has been refreshed in reference to this subject by the following passages: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" (Prov. iii. 5, 6). By the grace of God I do acknowledge the Lord in all my ways, and in this thing in particular; I have therefore the comfortable assurance that He will direct my paths concerning this part of my service, as to whether I shall be occupied in it our not. Further: "The integrity of the upright shall preserve them" (Prov. xi. 3). By the grace of God I am upright in this business. My honest purpose is to get glory to God. Therefore I expect to be guided aright. Further: "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established" (Prov. xvi. 3). I do commit my works unto the Lord, and therefore expect that my thoughts will be established. My heart is more and more coming to a calm, quiet, and settled assurance, that the Lord will condescend to use me still further in the orphan work. Here Lord is Thy servant.'

When later he decided to build two additional houses, Nos. 4 and 5, he writes thus again:—

'Twelve days have passed away since I wrote the last paragraph. I have still day by day been enabled to wait upon the Lord with reference to enlarging the Orphan work, and have been during the whole of this period also in perfect peace, which is the result of seeking in this thing only the Lord's honour and the temporal and spiritual benefit of my fellow-men. Without an effort could I by His grace put aside all thoughts about this whole affair, if only assured that it is the will of God that I should do so; and, on the other hand, would at once go forward, if He would have it be so. I have still kept this matter entirely to myself. Though it be now about seven weeks, since day by day, more or less, my mind has been exercised about it, and since I have been daily praying about it, yet not one human being knows of it. As yet I have not even mentioned it to my dear wife in order that thus, by quietly waiting upon God, I might not be influenced by what might be said to me on the subject. This evening has been particularly set apart for prayer, beseeching the Lord once more not to allow me to be mistaken in this thing, and much less to be deluded by the devil. I have also sought to let all the reasons against building another Orphan House, and all the reasons for doing so pass before my mind: and now for the clearness and definiteness, write them down. . .

'Much, however, as the nine previous reasons weigh with me, yet they would not decide me were there not one more. It is this. After having for months pondered the matter, and having looked at it in all its bearings and with all its difficulties, and then having been finally led, after much prayer, to decide on this enlargement, my mind is at peace. The child who has again and again besought His Heavenly Father not to allow him to be deluded, nor even to make a mistake, is at peace, perfectly at peace concerning this decision; and has thus the assurance that the decision come to, after much prayer during weeks and months, is the leading of the Holy Spirit; and therefore purposes to go forward, assuredly believing that he will not be confounded, for he trusts in God. Many and great may be his difficulties; thousands and ten thousands of prayers may have ascended to God, before the full answer may be obtained; much exercise of faith and patience may be required; but in the end it will again be seen, that His servant, who trusts in Him, has not been confounded.'

PRAYER AND THE GLORY OF GOD.

We have sought more than once to enforce the truth, that while we ordinarily seek the reasons of our prayers not being heard in the thing we ask not being according to the will of God, Scripture warns us to find the cause in ourselves, in our not being in the right

state or not asking in the right spirit. The thing may be in full accordance with His will, but the asking, the spirit of the supplicant, not; then we are not heard. As the great root of all sin is self and self-seeking, so there is nothing that even in our more spiritual desires so effectually hinders God in answering as this: we pray for our own pleasure or glory. Prayer to have power and prevail must ask for the glory of God; and he can only do this as he is living for God's glory.

In George Muller we have one of the most remarkable instances on record of God's Holy Spirit leading a man deliberately and systematically, at the outset of a course of prayer, to make the glorifying of God his first and only object. Let us ponder well what he says, and learn the lesson God would teach us through him:—

'I had constantly cases brought before me, which proved that one of the especial things which the children of God needed in our day, was to have their faith strengthened.

'I longed, therefore, to have something to point my brethren to, as a visible proof that our God and Father is the same faithful God as ever He was; as willing as ever to PROVE Himself to be the LIVING GOD in our day as formerly, to all who put their trust in Him.

'My spirit longed to be instrumental in strengthening their faith, by giving them not only instances from the word of God, of His willingness and ability to help all who rely upon Him, but to show them by proofs that He is the same in our day. I knew that the word of God ought to be enough, and it was by grace enough for me; but still I considered I ought to lend a helping hand to my brethren.

'I therefore judged myself bound to be the servant of the Church of Christ, in the particular point in which I had obtained mercy; namely, in being able to take God at His word and rely upon it. The first object of the work was, and is still: that God might be magnified by the fact that the orphans under my care are provided with all they need, only by prayer and faith, without any one being asked; thereby it may be seen that God is FAITHFUL STILL, AND HEARS PRAYER STILL.

'I have again these last days prayed much about the Orphan House, and have frequently examined my heart; that if it were at all my desire to establish it for the sake of gratifying myself, I might find it out. For as I desire only the Lord's glory, I shall be glad to be instructed by the instrumentality of my brother, if the matter be not of Him.

'When I began the Orphan work in 1835, my chief object was the glory of God, by giving a practical demonstration as to what could be accomplished simply through the instrumentality of prayer and faith, in order thus to benefit the Church at large, and to lead a careless world to see the reality of the things of God, by showing them in this work, that the living God is still, as 4000 years ago, the living God. This my aim has been abundantly honoured. Multitudes of sinners have been thus converted, multitudes of the children of God in all parts of the world have been benefited by this work, even as I had anticipated. But the larger the work as grown, the greater has been the blessing, bestowed in the very way in which I looked for blessing: for the attention of hundreds of thousands has been drawn to the work; and many tens of thousands have come to see it. All this leads me to desire further and further to labour on in this way, in order to bring yet greater glory to the Name of the Lord. That He may be looked at, magnified, admired, trusted in, relied on at all times, is my aim in this service; and so particularly in this intended enlargement. That it may be seen how much one poor man, simply by trusting in God, can bring about by prayer; and that thus other children of God may be led to carry on the work of God in dependence upon Him; and that children of God may be led increasingly to trust in Him in their individual positions and circumstances, therefore I am led to this further enlargement.'

PRAYER AND TRUST IN GOD.

There are other points on which I would be glad to point out what is to be found in Mr. Muller's narrative, but one more must suffice. It is the lesson of firm and unwavering trust in God's promise as the secret of persevering prayer. If once we have, in submission to the teaching of the Spirit in the word, taken hold of God's promise, and believed that the Father has heard us, we must not allow ourselves by any delay or unfavourable appearances be shaken in our faith.

'The full answer to my daily prayers was far from being realized; yet there was abundant encouragement granted by the Lord, to continue in prayer. But suppose, even, that far less had come in than was received, still, after having come to the conclusion, upon scriptural grounds, after much prayer and self-examination, I ought to have gone on without wavering, in the exercise of faith and patience concerning this object; and thus all the children of God, when once satisfied that anything which they bring before God in prayer, is according to His will, ought to continue in believing, expecting, persevering prayer until the blessing is granted. Thus am I myself now waiting upon God for certain blessings, for which I have daily besought Him for ten years and six months without one day's intermission. Still the full answer is not yet given concerning the conversion of certain individuals, though in the meantime I

have received many thousands of answers to prayer. I have also prayed daily without intermission for the conversion of other individuals about ten years, for others six or seven years, for others from three or two years; and still the answer is not yet granted concerning those persons, while in the meantime many thousands of my prayers have been answered, and also souls converted, for whom I had been praying. I lay particular stress on this for the benefit of those who may suppose that I need only to ask of God, and receive at once; or that I might pray concerning anything, and the answer would surely come. One can only expect to obtain answers to prayers which are according to the mind of God; and even then, patience and faith may be exercised for many years, even as mine are exercised, in the matter to which I have referred; and yet am I daily continuing in prayer, and expecting the answer, and so surely expecting the answer, that I have often thanked God that He will surely give it, though now for nineteen years faith and patience have thus been exercised. Be encouraged, dear Christians, with fresh earnestness to give yourselves to prayer, if you can only be sure that you ask things which are for the glory of God.

'But the most remarkable point is this, that £6, 6s. 6d. from Scotland supplied me, as far as can be known now, with all the means necessary for fitting up and promoting the New Orphan Houses. Six years and eight months I have been day by day, and generally several times daily, asking the Lord to give me the needed means for this enlargement of the Orphan work, which, according to calculations made in the spring of 1861, appeared to be about fifty thousand pounds: the total of this amount I had now received. I praise and magnify the Lord for putting this enlargement of the work into my heart, and for giving me courage and faith for it; and above all, for sustaining my faith day by day without wavering. When the last portion of the money was received, I was no more assured concerning the whole, that I was at the time I had not received one single donation towards this large sum. I was at the beginning, after once having ascertained His mind, through most patient and heart-searching waiting upon God, as fully assured that He would bring it about, as if the two houses, with their hundreds of orphans occupying them, had been already before me. I make a few remarks here for the sake of young believers in connection with this subject: 1. Be slow to take new steps in the Lord's service, or in your business, or in your families: weigh everything well; weigh all in the light of the Holy Scriptures and in the fear of God. 2. Seek to have no will of your own, in order to ascertain the mind of God, regarding any steps you propose taking, so that you can honestly say you are willing to do the will of God, if He will only please to instruct you. 3. But when you have found out what the will of God is, seek for His help, and seek it earnestly, perseveringly, patiently, believingly, expectantly; and you will surely in His own time and way obtain it.

'To suppose that we have difficulty about money only would be a mistake: there occur hundreds of other wants and of other difficulties. It is a rare thing that a day occurs without some difficulty or some want; but often there are many difficulties and many wants to be met and overcome the same day. All these are met by prayer and faith, our universal remedy; and we have never been confounded. Patient, persevering, believing prayer, offered up to God, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, has always, sooner or later, brought the blessing. I do not despair, by God's grace, of obtaining any blessing, provided I can be sure it would be for any real good, and for the glory of God.

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4 The extracts are from a work in four volumes, The Lord's Dealings with George Muller. J. Nisbet & Co., London.

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INTRODUCTION

The question often arises how it is, with so much church-going, Bible-reading, and prayer, that the Christian fails to live the life of complete victory over sin and lacks the love and joy of the Lord. One of the most important answers, undoubtedly, is that he does not know what it is to die to himself and to the world. Yet without this, God's love and holiness cannot have their dwelling-place in his heart. He has repented of some sins, but knows not what it is to turn, not only from sin, but from his old nature and self-will.

Yet this is what the Lord Jesus taught. He said to the disciples that if any man would come after Him, he must hate and lose his own life. He taught them to take up the cross. That meant they were to consider their life as sinful and under sentence of death. They must give up themselves, their own will and power, and any goodness of their own. When their Lord had died on the cross, they would learn what it was to die to themselves and the world, and to live their life in the fullness of God.

Our Lord used the Apostle Paul to put this still more clearly. Paul did not know Christ after the flesh, but through the Holy Spirit Christ was revealed in his heart, and he could testify: "I am crucified with Christ; I live no longer; Christ liveth in me." In more than one of his Epistles the truth is made clear that we are dead to sin, with Christ, and receive and experience the power of the new life through the continual working of God's Spirit in us each day.

As the season of Lent approaches each year, our thoughts will be occupied with the sufferings and death of our Lord. Emphasis will be laid, in the preaching, on Christ for us on the cross as the foundation of our salvation. Less is said about our death with Christ. The subject is a deep and difficult one, yet every Christian needs to consider it. It is my earnest desire to help those Christians who are considering this great truth, that death to self and to the world is necessary for a life in the love and joy of Christ.

I have sought to explain the chief words of our Lord and of His disciples on this subject. May I point out two things to my reader. First, take time to read over what you do not understand at once. Spiritual truth is not easy to grasp. But experience has taught me that God's words taken into the heart and meditated on with prayer help the soul by degrees to understand the truth. And secondly, be assured that only through the continual teaching of the Holy Spirit in your heart will you be able to appropriate spiritual truths. The great work of the Holy Spirit is to reveal Christ in our hearts and lives as the Crucified One who dwells within us. Let this be the chief aim of all your devotion: complete dependence on God, and an expectation of continually receiving all goodness and salvation from Him alone. Thus will you learn to die to yourself and to the world, and will receive Christ, the Crucified and Glorified One, into your heart, and be kept through the continual working of the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray fervently for each other that God may teach us what it is to die with Christ -- a death to ourselves and to the world; a life in Christ Jesus.

Your Servant in the Lord, Andrew Murray

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, how shall I thank Thee for the unspeakable gift of Thy Son on the cross! How shall I thank Thee for our eternal salvation, wrought out by that death on the cross! He died for me that I might live eternally. Through His death on the cross I am dead to sin, and live in the power of His life.

Father in heaven, teach me, I humbly entreat Thee, what it means that I am dead with Christ and can live my life in Him. Teach me to realize that my sinful flesh is wholly corrupt and nailed to the cross to be destroyed, that the life of Christ may be manifest in me.

Teach me, above all, to believe that I cannot either understand or experience this except through the continual working of the Holy Spirit dwelling within me. Father, for Christ's sake I ask it. Amen.

> "Jesus hath now many lovers of His heavenly kingdom, but few bearers of His cross. He hath many desirous of consolation, but few of tribulation. He findeth many companions of His table, but few of His abstinence. All desire to rejoice with Him, few are willing to endure anything for Him, or with Him. Many follow Jesus unto the breaking of bread, but few to the drinking of the cup of His passion. Many reverence His miracles, few follow the ignominy of His cross." -- Thomas A Kempis

FIRST DAY

THE REDEMPTION OF THE CROSS

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us." --Galatians 3:13.

Scripture teaches us that there are two points of view from which we may regard Christ's death upon the cross. The one is the REDEMPTION OF THE CROSS: Christ dying for us as our complete deliverance from the curse of sin. The other, THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE CROSS: Christ taking us up to die with Him, and making us partakers of the fellowship of His death in our own experience.

In our text we have three great unsearchable thoughts. The law of God has pronounced a curse on all sin and on all that is sinful. Christ took our curse upon Him -- yea, became a curse -- and so destroyed its power, and in that cross we now have the everlasting redemption from sin and all its power. The cross reveals to us man's sin as under the curse, Christ becoming a curse and so overcoming it, and our full and everlasting deliverance from the curse.

In these thoughts the lost and most hopeless sinner finds a sure ground of confidence and of hope. God had indeed in Paradise pronounced a curse upon this earth and all that belongs to it. On Mount Ebal, in connection with giving the law, half of the people of Israel were twelve times over to pronounce a curse on all sin. And there was to be in their midst a continual reminder of it: "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Deuteronomy 21:23, 27:15-20). And yet who could ever have thought that the Son of God Himself would die upon the accursed tree, and become a curse for us? But such is in very deed the gospel of God's love, and the penitent sinner can now rejoice in the confident assurance that the curse is forever put away from all who believe in Christ Jesus.

The preaching of the redemption of the cross is the foundation and center of the salvation the gospel brings us. To those who believe its full truth it is a cause of unceasing thanksgiving. It gives us boldness to rejoice in God. There is nothing which will keep the heart more tender towards God, enabling us to live in His love and to make Him known to those who have never yet found Him. God be praised for the redemption of the cross!

SECOND DAY

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE CROSS

"Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus."
--Philippians 2:5.

Paul here tells us what that mind was in Christ: He emptied Himself; He took the form of a servant; He humbled Himself, even to the death of the cross. It is this mind that was in Christ, the deep humility that gave up His life to the very death, that is to be the spirit that animates us. It is thus that we shall prove and enjoy the blessed fellowship of His cross.

Paul had said (ver.1): "If there is any comfort in Christ," -- the Comforter was come to reveal His real presence in them -- "if any fellowship of the Spirit," -- it was in this power of the Spirit that they were to breathe the Spirit of the crucified Christ and manifest His disposition in the fellowship of the cross in their lives.

As they strove to do this, they would feel the need of a deeper insight into their real oneness with Christ. They would learn to appreciate the truth that they had been crucified with Christ, that their "old man" had been crucified, and that they had died to sin in Christ's death and were living to God in His life. They would learn to know what it meant that the crucified Christ lived in them, and that they had crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts. It was because the crucified Jesus lived in them that they could live crucified to the world.

And so they would gradually enter more deeply into the meaning and the power of their high calling to live as those who were dead to sin and the world and self. Each in his own measure would bear about in his life the marks of the cross, with its sentence of death on the flesh, with its hating of the self life and its entire denial of self, with its growing conformity to the crucified Redeemer in His deep humility and entire surrender of His will to the life of God.

It is no easy school and no hurried learning -- this school of the cross. But it will lead to a deeper apprehension and a higher appreciation of the redemption of the cross, through the personal experience of the fellowship of the cross.

THIRD DAY

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

"I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me." -- Galatians 2:20.

The thought of fellowship with Christ in His bearing the cross has often led to the vain attempt in our own power to follow Him and bear His image. But this is impossible to man until he first learns to know something of what it means to say, "I have been crucified with Christ."

Let us try to understand this. When Adam died, all his descendants died with him and in him. In his sin in Paradise, and in the spiritual death into which he fell, I had a share: I died in him. And the power of that sin and death, in which all his descendants share, works in every child of Adam every day.

Christ came as the second Adam. In His death on the cross all who believe in Him had a share. Each one may say in truth, "I have been crucified with Christ." As the representative of His people, He took them up with Him on the cross, and me too. The life that He gives is the crucified life, in which He entered heaven and was exalted to the throne, standing as a Lamb as it had been slain. The power of His death and life work in me, and as I hold fast the truth that I have been crucified with Him, and that now I myself live no more but Christ liveth in me, I receive power to conquer sin; the life that I have received from Him is a life that has been crucified and made free from the power of sin.

We have here a deep and very precious truth. Most Christians have but little knowledge of it. That knowledge is not gained easily or speedily. It needs a great longing in very deed to be dead to all sin. It needs a strong faith, wrought by the Holy Spirit, that the union with Christ crucified -- the fellowship of His cross -- can day by day become our life. The life that He lives in heaven has its strength and its glory in the fact that it is a crucified life. And the life that He imparts to the believing disciple is even so a crucified life with its victory over sin and its power of access into God's presence.

It is in very deed true that I no longer live, but Christ liveth in me as a Crucified One. As faith realizes and holds fast the fact that the crucified Christ lives in me, life in the fellowship of the cross becomes a possibility and a blessed experience.

FOURTH DAY

CRUCIFIED TO THE WORLD

"Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world." --Galatians 6:14.

What Paul had written in Galatians_2 is here in the end of the epistle confirmed, and expressed still more strongly. He speaks of his only glory being that in Christ he has in very deed been crucified to the world and entirely delivered from its power. When he said "I have been crucified with Christ," it was not only an inner spiritual truth, but an actual, practical experience in relation to the world and its temptations. Christ had spoken about the world hating Him, and His having overcome the world. Paul knows that the world, which nailed Christ to the cross, had in that deed done the same to him. He boasts that he lives as one crucified to the world, and that now the world as an impotent enemy was crucified to him. It was this that made him glory in the cross of Christ. It had wrought out a complete deliverance from the world.

How very different the relation of Christians to the world in our day! They agree that they may not commit the sins that the world allows. But except for that they are good friends with the world, and have liberty to enjoy as much of it as they can, if they only keep from open sin. They do not know that the most dangerous source of sin is the love of the world with its lusts and pleasures.

O Christian, when the world crucified Christ, it crucified you with Him, When Christ overcame the world on the cross, He made you an overcomer too. He calls you now, at whatever cost of self-denial, to regard the world, in its hostility to God and His kingdom, as a crucified enemy over whom the cross can ever keep you conqueror.

What a different relationship to the pleasures and attractions of the world the Christian has who by the Holy Spirit has learned to say: "I have been crucified with Christ; the crucified Christ liveth in me"! Let us pray God fervently that the Holy Spirit, through whom Christ offered Himself on the cross, may reveal to us in power what it means to "glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world had been crucified unto me."

FIFTH DAY

THE FLESH CRUCIFIED

"They that are in Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh
with the passions and the lusts thereof." --Galatians_5:24.

Of the flesh Paul teaches us (Romans 7:18), "In me, that is, IN MY FLESH, DWELLETH NO GOOD THING." And again (Romans 8:7), "The mind of the flesh is ENMITY AGAINST GOD; for it is not subject to the law of God, NEITHER INDEED CAN IT BE." When Adam lost the spirit of God, he became flesh. Flesh is the expression for the evil, corrupt nature that we inherit from Adam. Of this flesh it is written, "Our old man was crucified with Him" (Romans 6:6). And Paul puts it here even more strongly, "They that are in Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh."

When the disciples heard and obeyed the call of Jesus to follow Him, they honestly meant to do so, but as He later on taught them what that would imply, they were far from being ready to yield immediate obedience. And even so those who are Christ's and have accepted Him as the Crucified One little understand what that includes. By that act of surrender they actually have crucified the flesh and consented to regard it as an accursed thing, nailed to the cross of Christ.

Alas, how many there are who have never for a moment thought of such a thing! It may be that the preaching of Christ crucified has been defective. It may be that the truth of our being crucified with Christ has not been taught. They shrink back from the self-denial that it implies, and as a result, where the flesh is allowed in any measure to have its way, the Spirit of Christ cannot exert His power.

Paul taught the Galatians: "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the children of God." And only as the flesh is kept in the place of crucifixion can the Spirit guide us in living faith and fellowship with Christ Jesus.

Blessed Lord, how little I understood when I accepted Thee in faith that I crucified once for all the flesh with its passions and lusts! I beseech Thee humbly, teach me so to believe and so to live in Thee, the Crucified One, that with Paul I may ever glory in the cross on which the world and the flesh are crucified.

SIXTH DAY

BEARING THE CROSS

"He that doth not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it." --Matthew 10:38-39.

We have had some of Paul's great words to the Galatians about the cross and our being crucified with Christ. Let us now turn to the Master Himself to hear what He has to teach us. We shall find that what Paul could teach openly and fully after the crucifixion, was given by the Master in words that could at first hardly be understood, and yet contained the seed of the full truth.

It was in the ordination charge, when Christ sent forth His disciples, that He first used the expression that the disciple must take up his cross and follow Him.

The only meaning the disciples could attach to these words was from what they had often seen, when an evil-doer who had been sentenced to death by the cross was led out bearing his cross to the place of execution. In bearing the cross, he acknowledged the sentence of death that was on him. And Christ would have His disciples understand that their nature was so evil and corrupt that it was only in losing their natural life that they could find the true life. Of Himself it was true that all His life He bore His cross -- the sentence of death that He knew to rest upon Himself on account of our sins. And so He would have each disciple bear his cross -- the sentence of death upon himself and his evil, carnal nature.

The disciples could not at once understand all this. But Christ gave them seed words, which would germinate in their hearts and later on begin to reveal their full meaning. The disciple was not only to carry the sentence of death in himself, but to learn that in following the Master to His cross he would find the power to lose his life and to receive instead of it the life that would come through the cross of Christ.

Christ asks of His disciples that they should forsake all and take up their cross, give up their whole will and life, and follow Him. The call comes to us too to give up the self life with its self-pleasing and self-exaltation, and bear the cross in fellowship with Him -- and so shall we be made partakers of His victory.

SEVENTH DAY

SELF-DENIAL

"Then said Jesus unto His disciples, 'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.'" --Matthew 16:24.

Christ had for the first time definitely announced that He would have to suffer much and be killed and be raised again. "Peter rebuked Him, saying, 'Be it far from Thee, Lord; this shall never be unto Thee.'" Christ's answer was, "Get thee behind Me, Satan." The spirit of Peter, seeking to turn Him away from the cross and its suffering, was nothing but Satan tempting Him to turn aside from the path which God had appointed as our way of salvation.

Christ then adds the words of our text, in which He uses for the second time the words "take up the cross." But with that He uses a most significant expression revealing what is implied in the cross: "If any man come after Me, LET HIM DENY HIMSELF, and take up his cross." When Adam sinned, he fell out of the life of heaven and of God into the life of the world and of self. Self- pleasing, self-sufficiency, self- exaltation, become the law of his life. When Jesus Christ came to restore man to his original place, "being in the form of God, HE EMPTIED HIMSELF, taking the form of a servant, and HUMBLED HIMSELF even to the death of the cross." What He has done Himself He asks of all who desire to follow Him: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself."

Instead of denying himself, Peter denied his Lord: "I know not the man." When a man learns to obey Christ's commands, he says of HIMSELF: "I know not the man." The secret of true discipleship is to bear the cross, to acknowledge the death sentence that has been passed on self, and to deny any right that self has to rule over us.

Death to self is to be the Christian's watchword. The surrender to Christ is to be so entire, the surrender for Christ's sake to live for those around us so complete, that self is never allowed to come down from the cross to which it has been crucified, but is ever kept in the place of death.

Let us listen to the voice of Jesus: "Deny self"; and ask that by the grace of the Holy Spirit, as the disciples of a Christ who denied Himself for us, we may ever live as those in whom self has been crucified with Christ, and in whom the crucified Christ now lives as Lord and Master.

EIGHTH DAY

HE CANNOT BE MY DISCIPLE

"If any man cometh unto Me, and hateth not his own life,
HE CANNOT BE MY DISCIPLE. Whosoever doth not
bear his own cross, and come after Me, CANNOT BE
MY DISCIPLE. Whosoever he be of you that renounceth
not all that he hath, HE CANNOT BE MY DISCIPLE."
Luke 14:26-33.

For the third time Christ speaks about bearing the cross. He gives new meaning to it when He says that a man must hate his own life and renounce all that he has. Thrice over He solemnly repeats the words that without this a man cannot be His disciple.

"If a man hate not his own life." And why does Christ make such an exacting demand the condition of discipleship? Because the sinful nature we have inherited from Adam is indeed so vile and full of sin that, if our eyes were only opened to see it in its true nature, we would flee from it as loathsome and incurably evil. 'The flesh is enmity against God"; the soul that seeks to love God cannot but hate the "old man" which is corrupt through its whole being. Nothing less than this, the hating of our own life, will make us willing to bear the cross and carry within us the sentence of death on our evil nature. It is not till we hate this life with a deadly hatred that we will be ready to give up the old nature to die the death that is its due.

Christ has one word more: "He that renounceth not all that he hath," whether in property or character, "cannot be My disciple." Christ claims all. Christ undertakes to satisfy every need and to give a hundredfold more than we give up. It is when by faith we become conscious what it means to know Christ, and to love Him and to receive from Him what can in very deed enrich and satisfy our immortal spirits, that we shall count the surrender of what at first appeared so difficult, our highest privilege. As we learn what it means that Christ is our life, we shall count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. In the path of following Him, and ever learning to know and to love Him better, we shall willingly sacrifice all, self with its life, to make room for Him who is more than all.

NINTH DAY

FOLLOW ME

"Then Jesus, beholding him, loved him, and said: 'One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.'" --Mark 10:21.

When Christ spoke these words to the young ruler, he went away grieved. Jesus said: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" The disciples were astonished at His words. When Christ repeated once again what He had said, they were astonished out of measure, "Who then can be saved?" "Jesus looking upon them said, 'With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.'"

Christ had spoken about bearing the cross from the human side, as the one condition of discipleship. Here with the rich young ruler He reveals from the side of God what is needed to give men the will and the power thus to sacrifice all, if they are to enter the kingdom. He said to Peter, when he had confessed Him as Christ, the Son of God, that flesh and blood had not revealed it unto him, but His Father in heaven, to remind him and the other disciples that it was only by divine teaching that he could make the confession. So here with the ruler He unveils the great mystery that it is only by divine power that a man can take up his cross, can lose his life, can deny himself and hate the life to which he is by nature so attached.

What multitudes have sought to follow Christ and obey His injunction -- and have found that they have utterly failed! What multitudes have felt that Christ's claims were beyond their reach and have sought to be Christians without any attempt at the whole-hearted devotion and the entire self-denial which Christ asks for!

Let us in our study of what the fellowship of the cross means take today's lesson to heart and believe that it is only by putting our trust in the living God, and in the mighty power with which He is willing to work in the heart, that we can attempt to be disciples who forsake all and follow Christ in the fellowship of His cross.

TENTH DAY

A GRAIN OF WHEAT

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit. He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." --John 12:24-25.

All nature is a parable of how the losing of a life can be the way of securing a truer and higher life. Every grain of wheat, every seed throughout the world, teaches the lesson that through death lies the path to beautiful and fruitful life.

It was so with the Son of God. He had to pass through death in all its bitterness and suffering before He could rise to heaven and impart His life to His redeemed people. And here under the shadow of the approaching cross He calls His disciples: "If any man will serve Me, let him follow Me." He repeats the words: "He that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

One might have thought that Christ did not need to lose His holy life ere He could find it again. But so it was: God had laid upon Him the iniquity of us all, and He yielded to the inexorable law: Through death to life and to fruit.

How much more ought we, in the consciousness of that evil nature and that death which we inherited in Adam, be most grateful that there is a way open to us by which, in the fellowship of Christ and His cross, we can die to this accursed self! With what willingness and gratitude ought we to listen to the call to bear our cross, to yield our "old man" as crucified with Christ daily to that death which he deserves! Surely the thought that the power of the eternal Life is working in us, ought to make us willing and glad to die the death that brings us into the fellowship and the power of life in a risen Christ.

Alas, how little this is understood! Let us believe that what is impossible to man is possible to God. Let us believe that the law of the Spirit of Christ Jesus, the risen Lord, can in very deed make His death and His life the daily experience of our souls.

ELEVENTH DAY

THY WILL BE DONE

"O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou will." -- Matthew 26:39.

The death of Christ on the cross is the highest and the holiest that can be known of Him even in the glory of heaven. And the highest and the holiest that the Holy Spirit can work in us is to take us up and to keep us in the fellowship of the cross of Christ. We need to enter deeply into the truth that Christ the beloved Son of the Father could not return to the glory of heaven until He had first given Himself over unto death. As this great truth opens up to us it will help us to understand how in our life, and in our fellowship with Christ, it is impossible for us to share His life until we have first in very deed surrendered ourselves every day to die to sin and the world, and so to abide in the unbroken fellowship with our crucified Lord.

And it is from Christ alone that we can learn what it means to have fellowship with His sufferings, and to be made conformable unto His death. When in the agony of Gethsemane He looked forward to what a death on the cross would be, He got such a vision of what it meant to die the accursed death under the power of sin -- with God's countenance so turned from Him that not a single ray of its light could penetrate the darkness -- that He prayed the cup might pass from Him. But when no answer came, and He understood that the Father could not allow the cup to pass by, He yielded up His whole will and life in the word: "Thy will be done." O Christian, in this word of your Lord in His agony, you can enter into fellowship with Him, and in His strength your heart will be made strong to believe most confidently that God in His omnipotence will enable you in very deed with Christ to yield up everything, because you have in very deed been crucified with Him.

"Thy will be done" -- let this be the deepest and the highest word in your life. In the power of Christ with whom you have been crucified, and in the power of His Spirit, the definite daily surrender to the ever-blessed will of God will become the joy and the strength of your life.

TWELFTH DAY

THE LOVE OF THE CROSS

"Then said Jesus: 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.'" --Luke_23:34.

The seven words on the cross reveal what the mind of Christ is, and show the dispositions that become His disciples. Take the three first words, all the expression of His wonderful love.

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He prays for His enemies. In the hour of their triumph over Him, and of the shame and suffering which they delight in showering on Him, He pours out His love in prayer for them. It is the call to everyone who believes in a crucified Christ to go and do likewise, even as He has said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which persecute you." The law of the Master is the law for the disciple; the love of the crucified Jesus, the only rule for those who believe in Him.

"Woman, behold thy son!" "Behold thy mother!" The love that cared for His enemies cared too for His friends. Jesus felt what the anguish must be in the heart of His widowed mother, and commits her to the care of the beloved disciple. He knew that for John there could be no higher privilege, and no more blessed service, than that of taking His place in the care of Mary. Even so, we who are the disciples of Christ must not only pray for His enemies, but prove our love to Him and to all who belong to Him by seeing to it that every solitary one is comforted, and that every loving heart has some work to do in caring for those who belong to the blessed Master.

"Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." The penitent thief had appealed to Christ's mercy to remember him. With what readiness of joy and love Christ gives the immediate answer to his prayer! Whether it was the love that prays for His enemies, or the love that cares for His friends, or the love that rejoices over the penitent sinner who was being cast out by man -- in all Christ proves that the cross is a cross of love, that the Crucified One is the embodiment of a love that passes knowledge.

With every thought of what we owe to that love, with every act of faith in which we rejoice in its redemption, let us prove that the mind of the crucified Christ is our mind, and that His love is not only what we trust in for ourselves, but what guides us in our loving intercourse with the world around us.

THIRTEENTH DAYChapter 1

THE SACRIFICE OF THE CROSS
The Sin and Cause of Prayerlessness

"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" -- "I thirst." -- "It is finished." --Matthew 27:46, John 19:28,30.

The first three words on the cross reveal love in its outflow to men. The next three reveal love in the tremendous sacrifice that it brought, necessary to deliver us from our sins and give the victory over every foe. They still reveal the very mind that was in Christ, and that is to be in us as the disposition of our whole life.

"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" How deep must have been the darkness that overshadowed Him, for not one ray of light could pierce, and He could not say "My Father"! It was this awful desertion breaking in upon that life of childlike fellowship with the Father, in which He had always walked, that caused Him the agony and the bloody sweat in Gethsemane. "O My Father, let this cup pass from Me" -- but it might not be, and He bowed His head in submission: "Thy will be done." It was His love to God and love to man -- this yielding Himself to the very uttermost. It is as we learn to believe and to worship that love that we too shall learn to say: "Abba, Father, Thy will be done."

"I thirst." The body now gives expression to the terrible experience of what it passed through when the fire of God's wrath against sin came upon Christ in the hour of His desertion. He had spoken of Dives crying "I am tormented in this flame." Christ utters His complaint of what He now suffered. Physicians tell us that in crucifixion the whole body is in agony with a terrible fever and pain. Our Lord endured it all and cried: "I thirst"; soul and body was the sacrifice He brought the Father.

And then comes the great word: "It is finished." All that there was to suffer and endure had been brought as a willing sacrifice; He had finished the work the Father gave Him to do. His love held nothing back. He gave Himself an offering and a sacrifice. Such was the mind of Christ, and such must be the disposition of everyone who owes himself and his life to that sacrifice. The mind that was in Christ must be in us, ready to say: "I am come to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work." And every day that our confidence grows fuller in Christ's finished work must see our heart more entirely yielding itself like Him, a whole burnt offering in the service of God and His love.

FOURTEENTH DAY

THE DEATH OF THE CROSS

"'Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit.' And having said this, He gave up the ghost." --Luke 23:46.

Like David (Psalm 31:5), Christ had often committed His spirit into the hands of His Father for His daily life and need. But here is something new and very special. He gives up His spirit into the power of death, gives up all control over it, to sink down into the darkness and death of the grave, where He can neither think, nor pray, nor will. He surrenders Himself to the utmost into the Father's hands, trusting Him to care for Him in the dark, and in due time to raise Him up again.

If we have indeed died in Christ, and are now in faith every day to carry about with us the death of our Lord Jesus, this word is the very one that we need. Just think once again what Christ meant when He said that we must hate and lose our life.

We died in Adam; the life we receive from him is death; there is nothing good or heavenly in us by nature. It is to this inward evil nature, to all the life that we have from this world, that we must die. There cannot be any thought of any real holiness without totally dying to this self or "old man." Many deceive themselves because they seek to be alive in God before they are dead to their own nature -- a thing as impossible as it is for a grain of wheat to be alive before it dies. This total dying to self lies at the root of all true piety. The spiritual life must grow out of death.

And if we ask how we can do this, we find the answer in the mind in which Christ died. Like Him we cast ourselves upon God, without knowing how the new life is to be attained; but as we in fellowship with Jesus say, "Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit," and depend simply and absolutely upon God to raise us up into the new life, there will be fulfilled in us the wonderful promise of God's Word concerning the exceeding greatness of His power in us who believe, according to the mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.

This indeed is the true test of faith -- a faith that lives every day and every hour in absolute dependence upon the continual and immediate quickening of the divine life in us by God Himself through the Holy Spirit.

FIFTEENTH DAY

IT IS FINISHED

"When Jesus had received the vinegar, He said: 'It is finished.'" -- John 19:30.

The seven words of our Lord on the cross reveal to us His mind and disposition. At the beginning of His ministry He said (John 4:34): "My meat is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and TO FINISH HIS WORK." In all things, the small as well as the great, He should accomplish God's work. In the High Priestly Prayer at the end of the three years' ministry He could say (John 17:4): "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I HAVE FINISHED THE WORK which Thou gavest Me to do." He sacrificed all, and in dying on the cross could in truth say: "It is finished."

With that word to the Father He laid down His life. With that word He was strengthened, after the terrible agony on the cross, in the knowledge that all was now fulfilled. And with that word He uttered the truth of the gospel of our redemption, that all that was needed for man's salvation had been accomplished on the cross.

This disposition should characterize every follower of Christ. The mind that was in Him must be in us -- it must be our meat, the strength of our life, TO DO THE WILL OF GOD IN ALL THINGS, AND TO FINISH HIS WORK. There may be small things about which we are not conscientious, and so we bring harm to ourselves and to God's work. Or we draw back before some great thing which demands too much sacrifice. In every case we may find strength to perform our duty in Christ's word "It is finished." His finished work secured the victory over every foe. By faith we may appropriate that dying word of Christ on the cross, and find the power for daily living and dying in the fellowship of the crucified Christ.

Child of God, study the inexhaustible treasure contained in this word: "It is finished." Faith in what Christ accomplished on the cross will enable you to manifest in daily life the spirit of the cross.

SIXTEENTH DAY

DEAD TO SIN

"We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?" --Romans 6:2.

After having, in the first section of the Epistle to the Romans (1:16 to 5:11), expounded the great doctrine of justification by faith, Paul proceeds, in the second section (5:12 to 8:39), to unfold the related doctrine of the new life by faith in Christ. Taking Adam as a figure of Christ, he teaches that just as we all really and actually died in Adam, so that his death reigns in our nature, even so, in Christ, those who believe in Him actually and effectually died to sin, were set free from it, and became partakers of the new holy life of Christ.

He asks the question: "We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?" In these words we have the deep spiritual truth that our death to sin in Christ delivers us from its power, so that we no longer may or need to live in it. The secret of true and full holiness is by faith, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, to live in the consciousness: I am dead to sin.

In expounding this truth he reminds them that they were baptized INTO THE DEATH OF CHRIST. We were buried with Him through baptism into death. We became UNITED WITH HIM by the likeness of His death. Our "old man" was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away -- rendered void and powerless. Take time and quietly, asking for the teaching of the Holy Spirit, ponder these words until the truth masters you: I am indeed dead to sin in Christ Jesus. As we grow in the consciousness of our union with the crucified Christ, we shall experience that the power of His life in us has made us free from the power of sin.

Romans 6 is one of the most blessed portions of the New Testament of our Lord Jesus, teaching us that our "old man," the old nature that is in us, was actually crucified with Him, so that now we need no longer be in bondage to sin. But remember it is only as the Holy Spirit makes Christ's death a reality within us that we shall know, not by force of argument or conviction, but in the reality of the power of a divine life, that we are in very deed dead to sin. It only needs a continual living in Christ Jesus.

SEVENTEENTH DAY

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

"Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." "He believed God, who quickeneth the dead." --Romans 4:3,7.

Let us now, after listening to the words of our Lord Jesus about our fellowship with Him in the cross, turn to St. Paul, and see how through the Holy Spirit he gives the deeper insight into what our death in Christ means.

You know how the first section of Romans is devoted to the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ. After speaking (1:18-32) of the awful sin of the heathen, and then (2:1-29) of the sin of the Jew, he points out how Jew and Gentile are "guilty before God," "All have sinned and come short." And then he sets forth that free grace which gave the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (3:21-31). In chapter 4 he points to Abraham as having, when he believed, understood that God justified him freely by His grace, and not for anything that he had done.

Abraham had not only believed this, but something more. "He believed in God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth the things that are not as though they were." The two expressions are most significant, as indicating the two essential needs there are in the redemption of man in Christ Jesus. There is the need of justification by faith, to restore man to the favor of God. But there is more needed. He must also be quickened to a new life. Just as justification is by faith alone, so is regeneration also. Christ died on account of our sins; He was raised again on account of our justification.

In the first section (down to chap. 5:11) Paul deals exclusively with the great thought of our justification. But in the second section (5:12 to 8:39) he expounds that wonderful union with Christ, through faith, by which we died with Him, by which we live in Him, and by which, through the Holy Spirit, we are made free, not only from the punishment, but also from the power of sin, and are enabled to live the life of righteousness, of obedience, and of sanctification.

EIGHTEENTH DAY

DEAD WITH CHRIST

"If we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live
with Him." --Romans 6:8.

The reason that God's children live so little in the power of the resurrection life of Christ is because they have so little understanding of or faith in their death with Christ. How clearly this appears from what Paul says: "If we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him"; it is the knowledge and experience that gives us the assurance of the power of His resurrection in us. "Christ died unto sin once; but the life that He liveth, He liveth unto God" (ver. 10). It is only because and as we know that we are dead with Him, that we can live with Him.

On the strength of this, Paul now appeals to his readers. "Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus" (ver. 11). The words "even so reckon yourselves" are a call to an act of bold and confident faith. Reckon yourselves to be indeed dead unto sin, as much as Christ is, and alive to God in Christ Jesus. The word gives us a divine assurance of what we actually are and have in Christ. And this not as a truth that our minds can master and appropriate, but a reality which the Holy Spirit will reveal within us. In His power we accept our death with Christ on the cross as the power of our daily life.

Then we are able to accept and obey the command: "Let not sin reign in your mortal body; but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead; for sin shall not have dominion over you" (vers. 12,13,14). "Being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness; present your members as servants to righteousness unto sanctification. Being now made free from sin, ye have your fruit unto sanctification" (vers. 18,19,33).

The whole chapter is a wonderful revelation of the deep meaning of its opening words: "How shall we, WHO DIED TO SIN, live any more therein?" Everything depends upon our acceptance of the divine assurance: If we died with Christ, as He died, and now lives to God, we too have the assurance that in Him we have the power to live unto God.

NINETEENTH DAY

DEAD TO THE LAW

"Ye were made dead to the law, through the body of Christ." "Having died to that wherein we were holden, so that we serve in newness of the spirit." Romans 7:4,6.

The believer is not only dead to sin, but dead to the law. This is a deeper truth, giving us deliverance from the thought of a life of effort and failure, and opening the way to the life in the power of the Holy Spirit. "Thou shalt" is done away with; the power of the Spirit takes its place. In the remainder of this chapter (7:7-24) we have a description of the Christian as he still tries to obey the law, but utterly fails. He experiences that "in him, that in his flesh, dwelleth no good thing." He finds that the law of sin, notwithstanding his utmost efforts, continually brings him into captivity, and compels the cry: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" In the whole passage, it is everywhere "I," without any thought of the Spirit's help. It is only when he has given utterance to his cry of despair that he is brought to see that he is no longer under the law, but under the rule of the Holy Spirit (8:1,2). "There is therefore now no condemnation," such as he had experienced in his attempt to obey the law, "to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." As chapter_7 gives us the experience that leads to being a captive under the power of sin, chapter_8 reveals the experience of the life of a man in Christ Jesus, who has now been made free from the law of sin and death. In the former we have the life of the ordinary Christian doing his utmost to keep the commandments of the law, and to walk in His ways, but ever finding how much there is of failure and shortcoming. In the latter we have the man who knows that he is in Christ Jesus, dead to sin and alive to God, and by the Spirit has been made free and is kept free from the bondage of sin and of death.

Oh that men understood what the deep meaning is of Romans 7, where a man learns that in him, that is in his flesh, there is no good thing, and that there is no deliverance from this state but by yielding to the power of the Spirit making free from the power and bondage of the flesh, and so fulfilling the righteousness of the law in the power of the life of Christ!

TWENTIETH DAY

THE FLESH CONDEMNED ON THE CROSS

"What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." -- Romans 8:3.

In Romans 8:7 Paul writes: "The mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be." Here Paul opens up the depth of sin that there is in the flesh. In chapter 7 he had said that in the flesh there is no good thing. Here he goes deeper, and tells us that it is enmity against God: it hates God and His law. It was on this account that God condemned sin in the flesh on the cross; all the curse that there is upon sin is upon the flesh in which sin dwells. It is as the believer understands this that he will cease from any attempt at seeking to perfect in the flesh what is begun in the Spirit. The two are at deadly, irreconcilable enmity.

See how this lies at the very root of the true Christian life (vers.3,4): "God condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." All the requirements of God's law will be fulfilled, not in those who strive to keep and fulfill that law -- a thing that is utterly impossible -- but in those who walk by the Spirit, and in His power live out the life that Christ won for us on the cross and imparted to us in the resurrection.

Would God that His children might learn the double lesson. In me, that is in my flesh, in the old nature which I have from Adam, there dwells literally no good thing that can satisfy the eye of a holy God! And that flesh can never by any process of discipline, or struggling, or prayer, be made better than it is! But the Son of God in the likeness of sinful flesh -- in the form of a man -- condemned sin on the cross. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

TWENTY-FIRST DAY

JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED

"I determined not to know anything among you, except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And my preaching was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." -- 1_Corinthians 2:2,4.

This text is very often understood of Paul's purpose in his preaching: to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. But it contains a far deeper thought. He speaks of his purpose, not only in the matter of his preaching, but in his whole spirit and life to prove how he in everything seeks to act in conformity to the crucified Christ. Thus he writes (2_Corinthians 13:4,5): "Christ was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth through the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him through the power of God toward you." His whole ministry and manner of life bore the mark of Christ's likeness -- crucified through weakness, yet living by the power of God.

Just before the words of our text Paul had written (1:17-24): "The word of the cross is to them that are perishing foolishness; but unto us who are being saved it is the power of God." It was not only in his preaching, but in his whole disposition and deportment that he sought to act in harmony with that weakness in which Christ was crucified. He had so identified himself with the weakness of the cross, and its shame, that in his whole life and conduct he would prove that in everything he sought to show forth the likeness and the spirit of the crucified Jesus. Hence he says (2:3): "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling."

It is on this account that he spoke so strongly: "Christ sent me to preach the gospel, not in wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made void" (1:17); "My preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (2:4). Have we not here the great reason why the power of God is so little manifested in the preaching of the gospel? Christ the crucified may be the subject of the preaching and yet there may be such confidence in human learning and eloquence that there is nothing to be seen of that likeness of the crucified Jesus which alone gives preaching its supernatural, its divine power.

God help us to understand how the life of every minister and of every believer must bear the hallmark, the stamp of the sanctuary: Nothing but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

TWENTY-SECOND DAY

TEMPERATE IN ALL THINGS

"Every man that striveth in the games is temperate in all things." "I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage." -- 1 Corinthians 9:25, 27.

Paul here reminds us of the well-known principle that anyone competing for a prize in the public games is "temperate in all things." Everything, however attractive, that might be a hindrance in the race is given up or set aside. And this in order to obtain an earthly prize. And shall we, who strive for an incorruptible crown, and that Christ may be Lord of all -- shall we not be temperate in all things that could in the very least prevent our following the Lord Jesus with an undivided heart?

Paul says: "I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage." He would allow nothing to hinder him. He tells us: "This one thing I do: I press towards the mark for the prize." No self-pleasing in eating and drinking, no comfort or ease, should for a moment keep him from showing the spirit of the cross in his daily life, or from sacrificing all, like his Master. Read the following four passages which comprise his life-history: 1 Corinthians 4:11-13; 2 Corinthians 4:8-12, 6:4-10, 11:23-27. The cross was not only the theme of his preaching, but the rule of his life in all its details.

We need to pray God that this disposition may be found in all Christians and preachers of the gospel, through the power of the Holy Spirit. When the death of Christ works with power in the preacher, then Christ's life will be known among the people. Let us pray that the fellowship of the cross may regain its old place, and that God's children may obey the injunction: "Let this mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus." He humbled Himself and became obedient unto the death of the cross. For, "if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection" (Romans 6:5).

TWENTY-THIRD DAY

THE DYING OF THE LORD JESUS

"Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body." "So then death worketh in us, but life in you." --2 Corinthians 4:10,12.

Paul here is very bold in speaking of the intimate union that there was between Christ living in him and the life he lived in the flesh, with all its suffering. He had spoken (Galatians 2:20) of his being crucified with Christ, and Christ living in him. Here he tells how he was always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus; it was through that that the life also of Jesus was manifested in his body. And he says that it was because of the death of Christ was thus working in and through him that Christ's life could work in them.

We often speak of our abiding in Christ. But we forget that that means the abiding in a crucified Christ. Many believers appear to think that when once they have claimed Christ's death in the fellowship of the cross, and have counted themselves as crucified with Him, that they may now consider it as past and done with. They do not understand that it is in the crucified Christ, and in the fellowship of His death, that they are to abide daily and unceasingly. The fellowship of the cross is to be the life of a daily experience, the self-emptying of our Lord, His taking the form of a servant, His humbling Himself and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross -- this mind that was in Christ is to be the disposition that marks our daily life.

"Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus." This is what we are called to as much as Paul. If we are indeed to live for the welfare of men around us, if we are to sacrifice our ease and pleasure to win souls for our Lord, it must be true of us, as of Paul, that we are able to say: Death worketh in us, but life in those for whom we pray and labor. For it is in the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ that the crucified Lord can live out and work out His life in us and through us.

Let us learn the lesson that the abiding in Christ Jesus, for which we have so often prayed and striven, is nothing less than the abiding of the Crucified in us, and we in Him.

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY

THE CROSS AND THE SPIRIT

"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience?" --Hebrews 9:14

The cross is Christ's highest glory. The glory which He received from the Father was entirely owing to His having humbled Himself to the death of the cross. "Wherefore also God highly exalted Him." The greatest work which the Holy Spirit could ever do in the Son of God was when He enabled Him to yield Himself a sacrifice and an offering for a sweet-smelling savour. And the Holy Spirit can now do nothing greater or more glorious for us than to lead us into the fellowship and likeness of that crucified life of our Lord.

Have we not here the reason that our prayers for the mighty working of the Holy Spirit are not more abundantly answered? We have prayed too little that the Holy Spirit might glorify Christ in us in the fellowship and the conformity to His sufferings. The Spirit, who led Christ to the cross, is longing and is able to maintain in us the life of abiding in the crucified Jesus.

The Spirit and the cross are inseparable. The Spirit led Christ to the cross; the cross brought Christ to the throne to receive the fullness of the Spirit to impart to His people. The Spirit taught Peter at once to preach Christ crucified; it was through that preaching that the three thousand received the Spirit. In the preaching of the gospel, in the Christian life, as in Christ, so in us, the Spirit and the cross are inseparable. It is the sad lack of the mind and disposition of the crucified Christ, sacrificing self and the word to win life for the dying, that is one great cause of the feebleness of the Church. Let us beseech God fervently to teach us to say: We have been crucified with Christ; in Him we have died to sin; "always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus." So shall we be prepared for that fullness of the Spirit which the Father longs to bestow.

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY

THE VEIL OF THE FLESH

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by the way which He dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh." --Hebrews 10:19,20.

In the temple there was a veil between the Holy Place and the Most Holy. At the altar in the court the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled for forgiveness of sins. That gave the priest entrance into the Holy Place to offer God the incense as part of a holy worship. But into the Most Holy, behind the veil, the high priest alone might enter once a year. That veil was the type of sinful human nature; even though it had received the forgiveness of sin, full access and fellowship with God was impossible.

When Christ died, the veil was rent. Christ dedicated a new and living way to God through the rent veil of His flesh. This new way, by which we now can enter into the Holiest of all, ever passes through the rent veil of the flesh. Every believer "has crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof" (Galatians 5:24). Every step on the new and living way for entering into God's holy presence maintains the fellowship with the cross of Christ. The rent veil of the flesh has reference, not only to Christ and His sufferings, but to our experience in the likeness of His sufferings.

Have we not here the reason why many Christians can never attain to close fellowship with God? They have never yielded the flesh as an accursed thing to the condemnation of the cross. They desire to enter into the Holiest of All, and yet allow the flesh with its desires and pleasures to rule over them. God grant that we may rightly understand, in the power of the Holy Spirit, that Christ has called us to hate our life, to lose our life, to be dead with Him to sin that we may live to God with Him. There is no way to a full abiding fellowship with God but through the rent veil of the flesh, through a life with the flesh crucified in Christ Jesus. God be praised that the Holy Spirit ever dwells in us to keep the flesh in its place of crucifixion and condemnation, and to give us the abiding victory over all temptations.

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY

LOOKING UNTO JESUS

"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us,
looking unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith,
who for the joy that was set before Him endured the
cross, despising the shame." --Hebrews 12:1,2.

In running a race the eye and heart are ever set upon the goal and the prize. The Christian is here called to keep his eye fixed on Jesus enduring the cross, as the one object of imitation and desire. In our whole life we are ever to be animated by His Spirit as He bore the cross. This was the way that led to the throne and the glory of God. This is the new and living way which He opened for us through the veil of the flesh. It is as we study and realize that it was for His bearing the cross that God so highly exalted Him, that we shall walk in His footsteps bearing our cross after Him with the flesh condemned and crucified.

The impotence of the Church is greatly owing to the fact that this cross-bearing mind of Jesus is so little preached and practiced. Most Christians think that as long as they do not commit actual sin they are at liberty to possess and enjoy as much of the world as they please. There is so little insight into the deep truth that the world, and the flesh that loves the world, is enmity against God. Hence it comes that many Christians seek and pray for years for conformity to the image of Jesus, and yet fail so entirely. They do not know, they do not seek with the whole heart to know, what it is to die to self and the world.

It was for the joy set before Him that Chris endured the cross -- the joy of pleasing and glorifying the Father, the joy of loving and winning souls for Himself. We have indeed need of a new crusade with the proclamation: This is the will of God, that as Christ found His highest happiness THROUGH HIS ENDURANCE OF THE CROSS, and received thereby from the Father the fullness of the Spirit to pour down on His people, so it is only IN OUR FELLOWSHIP OF THE CROSS that we can really become conformed to the image of God's Son. As believers awake to this blessed truth, and run the race ever looking to the crucified Jesus, they will receive power to win for Christ the souls He has purchased on the cross.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY

OUTSIDE THE GATE

"The bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the Holy Place, are burned outside the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach." --Hebrews 13:11-13.

The blood of the sin offering was brought into the Holy Place; the body of the sacrifice was burned outside the camp. Even so with Christ. His blood was presented to the Father; but His body was cast out as an accursed thing, outside the camp.

And so we read in Hebrews 10: "Let us enter into the Holy Place by the blood of Jesus." And in our text: "Let us go forth unto Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach." The deeper my insight is into the boldness which His blood gives me in God's presence, so much greater will be the joy with which I enter the Holy Place. And the deeper my insight is into the shame of the cross which He on my behalf bore outside the camp, the more willing shall I be, in the fellowship of His cross, to follow Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

There are many Christians who love to hear of the boldness with which we can enter into the Holy Place through His blood who yet have little desire for the fellowship of His reproach, and are unwilling to separate themselves from the world with the same boldness with which they think to enter the Sanctuary. The Christian suffers inconceivable loss when he thinks of entering into the Holy Place in faith and prayer, and then feels himself free to enjoy the friendship of the world, so long as he does nothing actually sinful. But the Word of God has said: "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity against God?" "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." "Be not conformed to this world."

To be a follower of Christ implies a heart given up to testify for Christ in the midst of the world, if by any means some may be won. To be a follower of Christ means to be like Him in His love of the cross and His willingness to sacrifice self that the Father may be glorified, and that men may be saved.

Blessed Savior, teach me what it means that I am called to follow Thee outside the camp, bearing Thy reproach, and so to bear witness to Thy holy redeeming love, as it embraces the men who are in the world to win them back to the Father. Blessed Lord, let the spirit and the love that was in Thee be in me too, that I may at any cost seek to win the souls for whom Thou hast died.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY

ALIVE UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS

"Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness. --1 Peter 2:24.

Here we have in the Epistle of Peter the same lessons that Paul has taught us. First, THE ATONEMENT OF THE CROSS: "Who His own self bare our sins in His body upon the tree." And then THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE CROSS; "That we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness."

In this last expression we have the great thought that a Christian cannot live unto righteousness except as he knows that he has died unto sin. We need the Holy Spirit to make our death to sin in Christ such a reality that we know ourselves to be forever free from its power, and so yield our members to God as instruments of righteousness. The words give us a short summary of the blessed teaching of Romans 6.

Dear Christian, it cost Christ much to bear the cross, and then to yield Himself for it to bear Him. It cost Him much when He cried: "Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour."

Let us not imagine that the fellowship of the cross, of which Peter speaks here, "that we, having died to sins, might live unto righteousness," is easily understood or experienced. It means that the Holy Spirit will teach us what it is to be identified with Christ in His cross. It means that we realize by faith how actually we shared with Christ in His death, and now, as He lives in us, abide in unceasing fellowship with Him, the Crucified One. This costs self- sacrifice; it costs earnest prayer; it costs a whole-hearted surrender to God and His will and the cross of Jesus; it costs abiding in Christ, and unceasing fellowship with Him.

Blessed Lord, make known to us day by day through the Holy Spirit the secret of our life in Thee: "We in Thee, and Thou in us." Let Thy Spirit reveal to us that as truly as we died in Thee, Thou now livest in us the life that was crucified and now is glorified in heaven. Let Thy Spirit burn the words deep into our hearts. Having died unto sin, and being forever set free from its dominion, let us know that sin can no more reign over us, or have dominion. Let us in the power of Thy redemption yield ourselves unto God as those who are alive from the dead, ready and prepared for all His will.

TWENTY-NINTH DAY

FOLLOWERS OF THE CROSS

"Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." --1_John 3:16.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend." Here our Lord reveals to us the inconceivable love that moved Him to die for us. And now under the influence and in the power of that love dwelling in us, comes the message: "WE OUGHT TO LAY DOWN OUR LIVES FOR THE BRETHREN." Nothing less is expected of us than a Christ-like life and a Christ-like love, proving itself in all our dealings with our brethren.

The cross of Christ is the measure by which we know how much Christ loves us. That cross is the measure too of the love which we owe to the brethren around us. It is only as the love of Christ on the cross possesses our hearts, and daily animates our whole being, that we shall be able to love the brethren. Our fellowship in the cross of Christ is to manifest itself in our sacrifice of love, not only to Christ Himself, but to all who belong to Him.

The life to which John calls us here is something entirely supernatural and divine. It is only the faith of Christ Himself living in us that can enable us to accept this great command in the assurance that Christ Himself will work it out in us. It is He Himself who calls us: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." Nothing less than this, a dying to our own nature, a faith that our "old man," our flesh has been crucified with Christ, so that we no longer need to sin -- nothing less than this can enable us to say: We love His commandments; this commandment too is not grievous.

But for such fellowship and conformity to the death of Christ, nothing will avail but the daily, unbroken abiding in Christ Jesus which He has promised us. By the Holy Spirit revealing and glorifying Christ in us, we may trust Christ Himself to live out His life in us. He who proved His love on the cross of Calvary, He Himself, He alone can enable us to say in truth: He laid down His life for us; we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. It is only as the great truth of the indwelling Christ obtains a place in the faith of the Church which it has not now, that the Christ-like love to the brethren will become the mark of true Christianity, by which all men shall know that we are Christ's disciples. This is what will bring the world to believe that God has loved us even as He loved Christ.

THIRTIETH DAY

FOLLOWING THE LAMB

"These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever
He goeth." --Revelation 14:4.

It may not be easy to say exactly what is implied in this following of the Lamb in the heavenly vision. But of this we may be sure, that it will be the counterpart in glory of what it is to follow in the footsteps of the Lamb here upon earth. As the Lamb on earth reveals what the Lamb in heaven would be, so His followers on earth can show forth something of the glory of what it is to follow Him in heaven.

And how may the footsteps of the Lamb be known? "He humbled Himself." "As a Lamb that is led to the slaughter, He opened not His mouth" (Isaiah 53:7). It is the meekness and gentleness and humility that marked Him which calls for His followers to walk in His footsteps.

Our Lord Himself said: "Learn of Me, that I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Paul writes: "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). And then he teaches us in what that mind consisted: Being in the form of God, He emptied Himself; He was made in the likeness of men; He took the form of a servant; He humbled Himself; He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. The Lamb is our Lord and Lawgiver. He opened the only path that leads to the throne of God. It is as we learn from Him what it means to be meek and lowly, what it means to empty ourselves, to choose the place of the servant, to humble ourselves and become obedient, even unto death, the death of the cross, that we shall find the new and living way that leads us through the rent veil into the Holiest of All.

"Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name" (ver.9). It is because Christians so little bear the mark of this self-emptying and humiliation even unto death that the world refuses to believe in the possibility of a Christ-filled life.

Children of God, oh come and study the Lamb who is to be your model and your Savior. Let Paul's words be the keynote of your life: "I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me." Here you have the way to follow the Lamb even to the glory of the throne of God in heaven.

THIRTY-FIRST DAY

TO HIM BE THE GLORY

"Unto Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." --Revelation 1:5,6.

Some of my readers may feel that it is not easy to understand the lesson of the cross, or to carry it out in their lives. Do not think of it as a heavy burden or yoke that you have to bear. Christ says: "My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." LOVE MAKES EVERYTHING EASY. Do not think of your love to Him, but of His great love to you, given through the Holy Spirit. Meditate on this day and night, until you have the assurance: He loves me unspeakably. It is through the love of Christ on the cross that souls are drawn to Him.

We have here the answer as to what will enable us to love the fellowship of the crucified Jesus. Nothing less than His love poured out through the continual breathing of the Holy Spirit into the heart of every child of God.

"UNTO HIM WHO LOVED US" -- Be still, O my soul, and think what this everlasting love is that seeks to take possession of you and fill you with joy unspeakable.

"AND WASHED US FROM OUR SINS IN HIS OWN BLOOD" -- Is that not proof enough that He will never reject me; that I am precious in His sight, and through the power of His blood am well-pleasing to God?

"AND HATH MADE US KINGS AND PRIESTS UNTO GOD AND HIS FATHER" -- and now preserves us by His power, and will strengthen us through His Spirit to reign as kings over sin and the world, and to appear as priests before God in intercession for others. O Christian, learn this wonderful song, and repeat it until your heart is filled with love and joy and courage, and turns to Him in glad surrender day by day: "To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Yes, to Him, who has loved me, and washed me from my sins in His blood, and made me a king and a priest -- TO HIM BE THE GLORY IN ALL AGES. Amen.

THE BLESSING OF THE CROSS

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." --Galatians 6:14.

One of the blessings of the cross consists in this, that it teaches us to know the worthlessness of our efforts and the utter corruption of our own nature. The cross does not offer to improve human nature, or to supply what man is unable to do. Many people, indeed, use it in this way, like patching a new cloth on an old garment. But this rends the garment, and such persons walk about in torn clothes, and go from one minister to another without finding what they seek. No, the old garment, our old man, must be laid aside, and given over to the death of the cross. And the cross causes all that is of the lost nature of man to die the accursed death, and the "I" takes the place of a malefactor; it breaks the staff over all that is of the old nature.

Whosoever has been brought to the cross through the Spirit has learned to pronounce the death sentence on his old nature, has broken the staff over himself, for whatever does not bear the mark of the cross lies under the curse. He who would save his life remains under the curse. If we have learned through the Spirit to understand the cross, then we have lost our life and will no longer expect any good from our old nature, and will not judge others, but ourselves only.

But as long as we have not been taught this lesson through the Spirit, we shall try to find good in ourselves, something of worth in God's sight, and upon which the sentence of death need not be passed. And if we find nothing at all, we fall into a false grief which the Evil One eagerly uses to make us despair, by saying: "You may as well give up. God will not trouble about you. There is nothing for you but failure."

But this is not what God desires. What we possess by nature must be nailed to the cross and we must put on the new man. The cross brings man to utter bankruptcy of himself, and then God can come to our aid. The cross brought the disciples of Jesus once to such an end of themselves, which even the words of the Master had failed to do. It took from them the aureole of holiness which they thought they had won in the three years that they followed Jesus, and it taught them to know themselves. And so they were prepared to receive the Holy Spirit, who would impart a new nature and a new life. For we cannot separate the cross from the Spirit. We can have no Easter and no Pentecost until we have first had a Good Friday.

Through the cross alone are we prepared for life in the fullness of God; only he who is crucified with Christ can be a vessel unto honor.

Our "old man" must be crucified with Christ (Romans 6:6), and in the resurrection of Christ we find the roots of our new life (1 Peter 1:3). Whosoever loses his life shall find it. We must learn the lesson of the cross as condemned and rejected ones, who have been crucified with Christ. Then the door will be open for a life of power and blessing. All that belongs to death must be given over to death, even as the body is laid away in the earth because it belongs to the earth.

The Holy Spirit, the Eternal Spirit, is unchangeable. He brought Christ our Head to the cross, and us His children with Him. For this work in us is twofold. On the one hand it leads us to death, and all that belongs to death; and on the other hand, to that life which God has placed within us, and which leads from glory to glory. (--Translated from G. Steinberger.)

PRAYER

How I praise Thee, O my God, for the gift of the Holy Spirit, who will reveal to me the secret of the cross of Christ! The Spirit strengthened Christ to offer Himself to God on the cross. The cross gave Christ the right to receive the fullness of the Spirit from the Father to pour out on all flesh. The cross gives us the right to receive the Spirit. And the Spirit teaches us to love the cross, and to partake of the life crucified with Christ.

O my Father, I thank Thee that Thou dost give the immediate, continual working of the Spirit in my heart, that the crucified Christ may be formed within me, and His life maintained within me.

Father, I beseech Thee humbly, teach me and Thy people so to know this work of the Spirit and to yield ourselves to Him to take full possession of us, that the crucified Lord Jesus may be glorified in us. Amen.

THE LORD'S TABLE

A Help to the Right Observance of the Holy Supper

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PART I

The Week before the Supper

My God, and is Thy table spread?
And does Thy cup with love o'erflow?
Thither be all Thy children led,
And let them all its sweetness know.

Hail, sacred feast, which Jesus makes!
Rich banquet of His flesh and blood!
Thrice happy he who here partakes
That sacred stream, that heavenly food!

O let Thy table honored be,
And furnished well with joyful guests;
And may each soul salvation see
That here its sacred pledges tastes.

Let crowds approach with hearts prepared,
With hearts inflamed let all attend;
Nor, when we leave our Father's board,
The pleasure or the profit end.

Revive Thy drooping Churches, Lord!
And bid our drooping graces live;
And more, that energy afford,
A Saviour's love alone can give.
–Philip Doddridge

SABBATH MORNING

The Divine Invitation

"Behold, I have made ready my dinner. All things are ready. Come to the marriage." –Matthew 22:4.

Let the King of Heaven and Earth say this to you. In honor of His Son He has prepared a great supper. There the Son bears His human nature. There are all the children of men, dear and precious to the Father, and He has caused them to be invited to the great festival of the Divine love. He is prepared to receive and honor them there as guests and friends. He will feed them with His heavenly food. He will bestow upon them the gifts and energies of everlasting life.

O my soul, thou also hast received this heavenly invitation. To be asked to eat with the King of Glory: how it behooves thee to embrace and be occupied with this honor. How desirous must you be to prepare yourself for this feast. How you must long that you should be in dress and demeanor, and language and disposition, all that may be rightly expected of one who is invited to the court of the King of kings.

Glorious invitation! I think of the banquet itself and what it has cost the great God to prepare it. To find food for angels: for this only one word was necessary. But to prepare for man upon this accursed earth a banquet of heavenly food–that cost Him much. Nothing less than the life and blood of His Son, to take away the curse and to open up to them the right and the access to heavenly blessings. Nothing less than the body and the blood of the Son of God could give life to lost men. O my soul, ponder the wonders of this royal banquet.

I think of the invitation. It is as free, as wide as it could be, "without money and without price." The poorest and the most unworthy are called to it. And so urgent and cordial is it. Not less cordial is the love which invites to it, the love which longs after sinners and takes delight in entertaining and blessing them.

I think of the blessing of the banquet. The dying are fed with the power of a heavenly life, the lost are restored to their places in the Father's house, those that thirst after God are satisfied with God Himself and with His love.

Glorious invitation! With adoration I receive it, and prepare myself to make use of it. I have read of those who hold themselves excused because they are hindered, –one by his merchandise, another by his work, and a third by his domestic happiness. I have heard the voice which has said, "I say unto you, that none of these men which were bidden shall taste of My supper." Under the conviction that He who so cordially invites me is the Holy One, who will not suffer Himself to be mocked, I will prepare myself to lay aside all thoughtlessness, to withdraw myself from the seductions of the world; and with all earnestness to yield obedience to the voice of the heavenly love. I will remain in quiet meditation and in fellowship with the children of God, to keep myself free from all needless anxiety about the world, and as an invited guest, to meet my God with real hunger and quiet joy. He Himself will not withhold from me His help in this work.

PRAYER.

Eternal God, I have received the good tidings that there is room also for me at the table of Thy Son. With grateful thanks I receive thy invitation, God of all grace. I hunger for Thy bread, O Lord. My soul thirsts for God. For the living God my flesh and my heart cry out. When shall I enter and appear before the face of God?

Lord, graciously bestow upon me this week a real blessing in the way of preparation. Let the sight of my sinfulness humble me deeply and take away from me all hope in myself. Let the sight of Thy grace again encourage me and fill me with confidence and gladness. Do Thou Thyself stir up within me a mighty desire for the Bridegroom, for the precious Jesus, without whom there could be no feast. And may it be manifest in me this week that I am full of the thought that I have an invitation to eat bread in the house of my God with his only-begotten and well-beloved Son. Lord, grant this for Jesus' sake.

Lord Jesus, thou hast taught me: "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Lord, spiritual worship we cannot bring: but Thou wilt bestow upon us Thy Spirit. I entreat thee, Lord, to grant the working of the Spirit. The blessing of the Supper is a high spiritual blessing. The invisible God will there come very near to us and will very mightily impart

the gift of eternal life to those who have the spiritual capacity for it. Only the spiritual mind can enjoy the spiritual blessing. Thou knowest how deeply I fail in this receptiveness for a full blessing. But grant, I pray thee, that the Holy Spirit may this week dwell and work in me with special power. I will surrender myself for this end to Him and to His guidance, in order that He may overcome in me the spirit of the world and renew my inner life to inherit from my God a new blessing,. Lord, let Thy Spirit work mightily within me.

And as I thus pray for myself I pray also for the whole congregation. Grant, Lord, in behalf of all thy children an overflowing outpouring of Thy Spirit, in order that this Supper may really be for all of us a time of quickening and renewal of our energies. Amen.

MONDAY MORNING

The Preparation

> "Where wilt Thou that we go and make ready, that thou mayest eat the passover?" "He will himself show you a large upper room furnished and ready, and there make ready for us." "If thou set thine heart aright, then stretch out thine hands toward Him." –Mark 4:12, 15; Job 11:13.

The greater a work is that a man undertakes the more important is the preparation. Four days before the Passover the Israelite had to make his preparations. The Lord Jesus also desired that care should be taken to obtain an upper room furnished and ready where the Passover might be prepared. When I am called upon to meet my God and to sit down at His table, I will see to it that I do not approach it unprepared. Otherwise I should dishonor Him and lose the blessing which is destined for me, and cover my soul with heavy guilt.

For a right preparation two things are necessary. The first is this: that my heart should be occupied and filled with Him who has invited me, and with all the glorious blessing which He is to bestow upon me. Great thoughts of Jesus and large expectations of what His love will do will set the heart aglow and be the best preparation for meeting Himself.

The second part of preparation is to consider if I shall be a worthy guest, acceptable and welcome to the Lord of the Feast: that is if I am really an invited guest willing and prepared to come to the table according to the law of the King in such a manner as He will approve of. To cherish mean thoughts of myself, and no more expectation from myself or of any good in me, and out of this to have deep-rooted renunciation of myself in order to be willing to live through Jesus alone–this is the attitude of soul which leads to a blessed observance of the Supper.

Man obtains nothing without laying out time upon it. Even where free grace is to do everything apart from our working, we must give it time to carry out its work in our hearts. It is only when in secrecy I resolve with myself to look to Jesus until my desires become truly operative within me, that I shall be really prepared for the banquet. It is only when I deal trustfully with Him in the ordinary converse of the hidden and the daily life, that I can expect extraordinary blessing from public communion with Him at His table. Yea, hunger and thirst cannot be awakened simply when I see the table. It is in the conflict of the preceding life that hunger and thirst are aroused. Only for such is the table a feast. May this quickening not be wanting to me in this preparation.

But, alas! just as little as it was my work to prepare the table with its food, am I in a position to prepare myself as a guest for the feast. The Lord who says, "All things are ready," has also prepared the wedding garment. He Himself will clothe the guests and prepare them for His feast. Therefore I will ask Him for this also. It was of the Lord that the disciples asked: "Where wilt thou that we prepare the passover?" Of Him also I may and will ask:

"Lord,how wilt thou that I prepare the passover?" This week I will continue in quiet meditations and prayer at His feet, with eye and heart fixed upon Him. I know assuredly that I shall find what is needful for me in celebrating this feast.

PRAYER.

Lord, deliver me from all superficiality and light-mindedness in drawing near to Thy table. Too often have I supposed that it is self-evident I must use again the Lord's Supper. I have considered too little how needful it was to take the stones out of the way, when the Lord Himself shall come to prepare His way and make His path straight. I fancied that it was a light thing to receive blessing. Lord, forgive me this error. Do Thou Thyself enable my soul to understand what is meant by saying that sinful man shall meet his God. Do Thou Thyself work within me true conscientiousness and eagerness to lay bare and to lay aside every sin, and trust myself wholly to Thee with a real surrender of the whole soul and of all its powers.

Lord Jesus, hear, I beseech Thee, this my petition. O Lord, grant that I may not lose the blessing by thoughtlessness or idleness. O my Lord, how much has it cost Thee to prepare the table for me, and now even this is not enough. I must still ask Thee to prepare me for the table. I thank Thee for the joyful assurance which I have that Thou wilt do this. Therefore I place myself for this week in Thy hands, in order that by Thy working in me a right condition of soul may be brought into existence.

Precious Lord, grant me the broken and contrite heart. And grant unto me to look up unto Thee with a living, active faith as my Friend, my Saviour, my All. Grant, Lord Jesus, that I also may be able to say: I have but one thought, one desire, and that is Jesus. So shall I be prepared with honor to the Father to glorify Thee by my cheerful confession that I desire nothing but Thee, and Thy wonderful love.

My Saviour, I depend upon Thee throughout this week. Work thou in me a true preparation for the Supper. I expect it from Thee. Amen.

TUESDAY MORNING

The Host

"And He said unto them, With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you." "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man bear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." –Luke 22:15; Revelation 3:20.

The best preparation is–to look into the heart of Jesus. When you understand what He that sits on the throne desires for you, how He longs after you, what He has prepared for you, this will more than aught else set your desires and longings in motion, and impart to you the right preparation.

That word of Jesus at the Paschal Table enables me to look into His heart. He knew that He must go from that feast to the Cross. He knew that His body must be broken, and His blood shed, in order that He might be really your Passover. He knew how in that night they should grieve and betray Him, and yet He says: "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you." What a love this is! And Jesus is still the same. Even with you, poor sinner, He earnestly desires to eat the Passover. Yea, on the throne of heaven, He looks forward with longing to the day of the Supper, to eat with you, and to quicken you. O man, let your sluggishness put you to shame: Jesus earnestly desires–Jesus greatly longs–to observe the Supper with you: He would not enjoy the food of heavenly life alone: He would fain eat of it along with you.

Or, we may think of it as that other word says: In order to observe the Supper with the soul, He stands at the door and knocks. Wonderful condescension! What is there in the vile sinner that the King of Heaven longs to sit down beside him? In order to hold a feast in my heart, Jesus stands at the door and knocks. Is not this inconceivable love? Is it not unspeakable blessing?

He would fain come in Himself. His presence is the special joy of the feast. And He Himself will hand to me and make me partaker of the heavenly food He brings to me. Even as the little weak infant, that does not know how to eat, is fed by its mother's hand, so will Jesus break for me the bread of heaven, and impart to me what I have need of.

Glorious Paschal feast thus observed with Jesus: glorious Supper held with Jesus. He is the Entertainer: He is the Wedding Garment: He is also the Food. He knows precisely what I need: He knows what it is that has hindered me hitherto, and the love of Jesus has seen meet to impart to me at His table just that one thing which can satisfy my hunger. Dost Thou, Lord Jesus, earnestly desire to keep the Passover with me? I venture to answer: I also earnestly desire to observe the Supper with Thee. My whole heart longs for the Supper with Jesus.

There is nothing on earth that awakens love and rouses it to activity so powerfully as the thought of being desired and loved. Let me endeavor to conceive how true it is that I am an object of desire to the Son of God. He looks out to see whether I am coming to Him or not. With the deepest interest, He would know whether I come hungering after Him, so that He may be able to bestow much of His blessing upon me. That would be such a joy to His love. "Open thy mouth wide; I will fill it abundantly." Thus does He stir me up to earnest longings. His desire is toward me. My soul, believe and ponder this wonderful thought, until you feel drawn with overmastering force to give yourself over to Jesus, for the satisfaction of His desire toward you: then shall you too be satisfied.

PRAYER.

Eternal Love, what am I that Thou shouldest desire to eat with me? Lord, it is too great a boon that Thou shouldest earnestly desire to eat with me: with me, who have desired so little to eat with Thee, who have longed so much more for the food that perisheth and for the fellowship of the world than for Thee and Thy heavenly bread. My Lord, give me so to feel the desire of Thy soul to eat with me, that my sluggishness and my unbelief shall be ashamed, and all that is within me may prepare to set my heart open with joy before Thee.

Yea, Lord, too long have I suffered Thee to stand at the door and knock: now will I open it to Thee. Make even my heart a banquet hall furnished and prepared where Thou mayest make ready the passover. Let the sight of Thy blood poured out for me be to me the full assurance of redemption. Let the eating of the Lamb fill me with the power of a heavenly life. Let the eating with Thee be fellowship with Thyself and Thy love be the joy of my soul. Blessed Jesus, let the love of Thy heart which draws Thee to me, also

draw me to Thee.

My Saviour, it is this especially that I crave at Thy hand: unveil to me the love of Thy heart that makes Thee long so much after me. I know that this is one of the secret things that remain for Thy dearest friends, and I hardly dare reckon myself amongst them. And yet, Lord, may I venture to do so? Grant me, I pray Thee, one more glance into Thy heart, that I may know how earnestly Thou dost desire to eat with me. Let my soul conceive what it is to have me at Thy table with this great desire. Thou wouldst have me as Thine own possession. Thou wouldst enter into the deepest communion with me. Thou wouldst communicate Thyself to me. Thou wouldst become one with me. Thou wouldst have me for Thyself. My Jesus, if this be really so, cause me to feel it. Let not my heart remain in darkness. Then shall I turn away from all else, and my life shall be filled with one supreme desire–to eat with Jesus, my King and my Friend. Precious Jesus, grant that it may indeed be so. Amen.

WEDNESDAY MORNING

Self-Examination

"But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup." "Try your own selves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves. Or know ye not as to your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you? unless indeed, ye be reprobate." –1 Corinthians 11:28; 2 Corinthians 13:5.

No one may eat of the bread without self-examination. The danger of "unworthy communicating" is indeed very great. The sin of "making oneself guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" is very grave. The possibility of eating judgment unto oneself is very fearful (read I Corinthians 11:27-30). Everyone who is truly desirous of a blessing at the table will be very willing to yield obedience to the command of our Lord; "Try your own selves:" "Prove your own selves."

The problem of self-examination is simple. According to the apostle, there are but two conditions, either Jesus Christ is in you, or ye are reprobate: one of two. There is no third condition. The life of Christ in you may still be weak; but if you are truly born again and a child of God, Christ is in you. And then as a child you have access to the table of the Father and a share in the children's bread.

But if Christ is not in you, you are "reprobate." Nothing that is in you, nothing that you do, or are, or even desire and wish to be, makes you acceptable to God. The God against whom you have sinned inquires only about one thing: whether you have received His Son. "He that hath the Son hath the life." With nothing less than this can He be content: with this He is fully satisfied. If Christ is in you, you are acceptable to the Father. But if Christ is not in you, you are at the very same moment "reprobate." You have come in to the Lord's Supper without the wedding garment: your lot must be in the outermost darkness. You are unworthy.
.
You eat judgment to yourself.
You make yourself "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."

Reader, how is it with you? What will God say of you when He sees you at the table? Will God look upon you as one of His children, who are very heartily welcome to Him at His table, or as an intruder who has no right to be at His table? You would not for a moment sit down at the table of a man on earth if you were aware that you were not welcome to him, or if you thought that he did not willingly see you there. Surely, then, you would not dream of sitting down at the table of God, while it is still possible that He may look upon you with anger, as one who is desecrating His ordinance. Reader, pray answer this question: What will God say of you when He beholds you at His table? You are one of two things: you are either a true believer and a child of God, or you are not. If you are a child of God, you have a right to the table and eat the bread of the Father, however feeble you may be. But if you are not a child of God, no true believer, you have no right to it. You may not go forward to it.

Reader, try your own self, whether you are in the faith: prove yourself. And should it appear that you do not yet have Christ, then even to-day receive Him. There is still time. Without delay give yourself to Christ: in Him you have a right to the Lord's Table.

PRAYER.

Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way that is everlasting. Lord, Thou knowest how deceitful the heart is, far above all things. But, Lord, Thou knowest the heart, even my heart. And now I come to Thee, Omniscient One, and set my heart before Thee with the prayer: Lord, make me know whether Jesus Christ is in me, or whether I am still without Him, and reprobate before Thee.

Of old, Thou Thyself didst see to it that hypocrites should be cast out from the midst of Thy people. Thou didst point out Achan. Thou didst make known the man who dipped his hand in the dish with Thy Son. Thou didst detect Ananias. Thou art the King who comest in to scrutinize the guests that have sat down, and who sayest: "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not being in the wedding garment?" Thou art still mighty to search the hearts. Lord, hear now the supplication of Thy people, ,and purge Thy congregation. Let the life of the Spirit become so powerful that all doubts shall vanish, and Thy children know and confess that Christ is in them. Let Thy presence in their midst effect such a joy and such a reverence that mere confessors with the lips shall be afraid, and the self-righteous be brought to detection. Lord, make it known to many who are still content in uncertainty, whether Christ is in them or whether they are reprobate.

Great God, make this known to me. Is Jesus Christ in me? Let the Holy Spirit give me the blessed assurance of this. Then shall I sit down with confidence as Thy child at Thy table.

And if Jesus Christ is still not in me, and I am still without Christ and reprobate before Thee, Thou merciful One, make this known to me. Make me willing to know this, and not to draw near to Thy table except that Jesus Christ is in me. Lord, I come now to Thee to set my heart open before Jesus, and to receive Him as my Saviour. Amen..

PRAYER.

(for one who has discovered that Jesus Christ is not in him).

Lord God, I had thought of going forward to Thy table. A sense of obligation came even to me, and I made myself ready for the hour of the feast. But, behold, Thy word has made me afraid. It tells me that, if Jesus Christ is not in me, I am reprobate.

Lord, have compassion upon me. I know that I may not sit down without the wedding garment. Thou art the Lord of table; Thy word must prevail there. Thou art the Holy God. Thou canst not meet in love with the sinner who is not washed from his sin and clothed with the righteousness of Christ. And, Lord, I fear that I am still without that wedding garment: my sins are not forgiven me. Lord, have pity upon me: I dare not go to Thy table: the bread of the children is not for me.

I dare not go forward. And yet, Lord, I dare not remain away. To have no part in Jesus, no share in Thy friendship, no place in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb on high–woe is me, if this must be my lot. Lord, have mercy upon me, and, if it be possible, grant unto me that which I require for sitting down at Thy table.

Lord God, I have heard of Thy mercy. Thou givest the wedding garment for nothing: Thou forgivest the vilest sinner. Too long have I been content without really having Jesus Christ in me. Lord, now I come to Thee. Before Thee I lay my unrighteousness, which is great. I am entirely under the power of sin, and cannot help myself. Lord, Thou alone canst help me: and Thou wilt also do it. Be pleased to receive me. I cast myself down here before Thee: I here surrender myself to Thee. This day let the blood of Jesus wash me.

Lord Jesus, given by the Father for me, I receive Thee. I receive Thee, Lord, as my Saviour. I believe that Thou art for me. Here I give Thee my heart–my poor, sinful heart: come and dwell in it, and let me also know that Jesus Christ is in me.

My God, my soul cries out and longs for Thee: make me truly partaker of Jesus. Amen.

THURSDAY MORNING

Confession of Sin

"I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin." "How many are mine iniquities and sins: make me to know my transgression and my sin." " Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." –Psalm 38:18 Job 8:23; Matthew 5:4.

At the outset" says our Directory, "let everyone examine his heart, to see whether he be grieved on account of his sins, and humble himself before God." This is the first element of genuine self-examination. It cannot indeed be otherwise. The salvation of the Lord Jesus is a salvation from sin. The power, the grace, the Blessing of Jesus are exhibited in the taking away of sin out of us, and the implanting within us instead of the holiness and the life of heaven. And it is because the Lord's Supper is intended to serve as a renewed and an increased participation of the life of Christ, that a new and deeper acknowledgment of sin is the most desirable preparation for the Supper. It is not merely he that is still seeking for forgiveness who must think of and confess his sins. No: it is especially the believer that has need to acknowledge aright and with all earnestness the sins which he still commits and their antipathy to God. The more he really despairs of himself, the more glorious will Christ become in his eyes. The more keenly he feels every sin, the more will Jesus become to him. Every sin is a need that calls for Jesus. By the confession of sin, you point out to Him the spot where you are wounded, and where He must exhibit the healing power of His blood. Every sin that you confess is an acknowledgment of something which Jesus must cast out, and the place of which He is bound to fill up with one of the lovely gifts of His holiness. Every sin that you confess is a new reason why you should believe more and ask more, and a new reason why Jesus should bless you.

Christian, prepare yourself for the Holy Supper by thinking of your sins. Be not afraid to make mention of them by name before Jesus. Point out to Him that which you desire He should change in you. Sin which is not confessed is also not combated. When a saved soul goes to Jesus to speak with Him about sin, and to make it known to Him, it breaks sin's power and makes Him more precious. The very same light that enables you to feel the curse of sin more deeply, enables you also to discern the perfect and final victory over it. The experience, utterly lost, prepares the way for the experience utterly redeemed.

Beloved child of God, you do not perhaps yet know what a source of blessing a deep conviction of sin is. Do not be afraid of it: do not turn away from it. The blessed Spirit of God will give it to you. Through the increasing grace of Jesus in you, through your deepening fellowship in the life of heaven, He will so discover its incurable sinfulness, that this very experience shall lead you to that entire surrender to Jesus which is so gloriously sealed in the Lord's Supper.

PRAYER.

Lord God, Thou searchest and knowest us. Thou art He that knowest the hearts and triest the reins. Before Thee, there is no creature that is not made manifest: but all things are naked and open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. Thine eyes see through the heart alike of the ungodly and the righteous. Thou art the Omniscient One, the Searcher of hearts.

Lord, how terrible is Thine omniscience for Thine enemies. That eye which burns in heaven as a flame of fire is always upon them. They would fain flee away from it, but they are never able. But for Thy people, Thine omniscience is a comfort and a refuge. Thou art He who can help them against themselves and the deceitfulness of their own hearts. They invite Thine omniscience to search their heart and to cleanse them from their secret faults.

Holy God, I too place myself in Thine hands. Search me, O God, and know my heart. With fear, and yet from the depths of my heart, I say unto thee: Holy God, I wish to tolerate no single sin, however secret or deeply rooted it may be. Lord, I crave Thy help: I place myself in the light of Thy flaming eyes, before which no sin can stand. Search me, O God, and know my heart.

I Know, Lord, that the answer is oftentimes terrible: "By terrible things Thou wilt answer us in righteousness, O God of our salvation." I know, when Thou dost suffer man to enter into temptation and let him see what is in his heart, that the humiliation and the shame and the sorrow are often deep and bitter. I know that when Thou trustest Thy mighty hand into the bosom to root out the almost unknown and yet deeply-rooted sin, flesh and blood must then fail. And yet I cry: Search me, O God, and know my heart.

Lord, make me know the sin to which I am blind: my characteristic sins also, about which I am so sensitive when any other speaks of them, whether it be the love of money with its seduction, or the love of the world with its vanity, or the love of self with its entanglement, make me to know it. Lord, use friend or foe: use what means Thou wilt, O my Father: only search me and know my heart: cleanse me from secret errors, and let no hurtful way abide with me, but lead me in the way that is everlasting.

Yes, gracious Lord, give me such an overmastering conviction of the entire corruption of my nature that I shall be constrained to receive in its completeness the perfect redemption of Christ. Amen.

FRIDAY MORNING

Faith

"Thy sins are forgiven. Thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace." –LUKE 7:48-50.

At the table Jesus gathers His friends, and the Father waits only for His children to distribute to them the children's bread. The table is not the place for me to be converted or to ask the expiation of my sins. No: these blessings I must seek in solitude: in the inner chamber Jesus will suffer Himself to be found with eagerness and certainty. The table is the place for His redeemed to confess their Lord, for His believers to have their faith strengthened, for His friends to renew their covenant. On this account our Directory mentions to us as the second element of self-examination before we go to the table, the question whether we really believe in the forgiveness of sins. "In the next place, let everyone examine his heart as to whether be also believes this sure promise of God that all his sins are forgiven for Christ's sake." It is through faith in the forgiveness of sins that the soul obtains confidence to draw near to the Lord, and thereby also obtains the blessing of a strengthened faith.

Reader, you are to go to the Lord's Supper: do you believe in the forgiveness of your sins? You know what this means. Forgiveness is not the taking away of the sinfulness of the heart or sanctification: no, but only the beginning of the way by which it is to be reached. Forgiveness is the free declaration by which God acquits you of the evil you have hitherto done, and no longer reckons the guilt of it to you. Forgiveness comes first in order: then forthwith begins sanctification and renewal. For the present this is the question before you: Do you believe in the forgiveness of your sins–that your sins are blotted out?

You know what faith is. You know that it is a feeling, an experience of something that keeps man intently occupied with his own condition. You know that it is a going out of ourselves to find a resting place in God and His word, so that faith in the forgiveness of sins is the certitude that your sins are forgiven, and that on no other ground except that God has said He has done so. Consequently, faith that your sins are forgiven is nothing but the confidence that you, as a poor sinner resting in His word, have come to Him, and that your sins have been blotted out of His book. You know it, because God has promised it.

Reader, do you thus believe in the forgiveness of sins–"that your sins are blotted out for Christ's sake"? Are you one of those concerning whom the Directory says: "Let everyone examine his heart whether he has believed the sure promise of God that all his sins are forgiven, and that the perfect righteousness of Christ is bestowed upon him and reckoned to him as his own"? Yea, as completely as if he himself in his own person had atoned for all his sins and fulfilled all righteousness.

Blessed are ye who believe this. You have confidence to draw near to the Lord's Table. Believing in the truth of the word, "He abundantly pardons," believing in the power of Jesus Christ really to cleanse the conscience, believing with a personal appreciation that the promise of forgiveness is also for you, you know that your guilt is blotted out–that your sins are remembered no more.

Christian, come to the table in this faith. Let your song of praise be: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, who forgiveth all thine iniquities." Ask for the Holy Spirit, that He may make faith in forgiveness within you more certain, more powerful, more joyful. You will then experience at the table what a life of love and blessing and growing power God has prepared for all on whom He first bestows the forgiveness of sins.

PRAYER.

Lord God, I find myself on the way to Thy table. I desire also to receive there what Jesus gives when He says: "This cup is the New Covenant in my blood which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins." Lord, I desire this day to acknowledge in a new act of faith my participation in the forgiveness of sins, and thus to meet with Thee at the Supper as Thine own in the joy of redemption.

For this end, wilt Thou grant unto me a sight of the work of Jesus as all-sufficient and perfectly fulfilled, so that there is nothing for me now to do save to receive it and rejoice in it? Renew in me by the Holy Spirit the living assurance of my part in Jesus. And help me, Lord, with a clearer faith than ever before to appropriate the whole redemption of Thy Son with all Thy rich and glorious promises.

Lord, I beseech Thee, let no doubt rob me of this blessing. When I look to myself, there is nothing but fear, and condemnation.

When I have to question my heart and what I feel there, I have no hope. But I look to Thy word. It makes me cry out: "Who is a God like unto Thee that forgiveth iniquity?" (Mic. 7:18). That word points me to the Cross of Thy dear Son, who died for the ungodly, and says to me: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive all our sins." That word teaches me to say: "With Thee is forgiveness." Lord, on that word I depend: With Thee is forgiveness. I have confessed my sin before Thee: I lay my whole sinfulness bare before Thee, and I believe that through the virtue of the blood of Jesus, Thou forgivest my sin.

My God, grant me grace to hold fast by this truth, and with every fresh sin to flee always straight to the blood of Christ. Grant that I may sit down at Thy table with the blessed joy of a firm faith in the great promise of the New Covenant: "I will be gracious to your iniquities, and your sins and transgressions will I remember no more."

Lord God, this Thou hast said, and that will I believe. Amen.

SATURDAY MORNING

Self-Surrender

> "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge that one died for all, therefore all died: and He died for all, that they which live shall no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sake died, and rose again." –2 Cor. 5:14-15.

In the third place, let everyone examine his heart to see whether He is conscious of having heretofore manifested genuine thankfulness toward God with his whole life." So the Directory expresses what Must Constitute the third part of self-examination, whether I have been hitherto conscious of dedicating myself to the Lord as a living thank offering, not in single things only, but in my whole life.

This is what Jesus desires. Every redeemed soul must be a man consecrated to God, entirely separated to live for Him, His will, His work, His honor. This also is what the true Christian desires: he acknowledges the equity of the demand which Jesus makes, the perfect right which Jesus has to him as His blood-bought possession. This is what the true Christian expects in the power of the love of Christ shed abroad in the heart, in the strength of the new life. And this dedication, this complete surrender, is what the believer especially confesses and completes in the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is always a sacrificial repast, and that in a double sense. Under the Old Covenant there were special sacrifices–namely, the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the thank offering. The sin offering, by which atonement was made, was the type of the sacrifice of Christ alone. "He was made sin for us." The burnt offering, which had to be wholly consumed by fire on the altar, as a symbol of entire devotedness to the service of God, was the type alike of the sacrifice of Christ and of the sacrifice of believers in which they surrender themselves to the Lord (Rom. 12:1). Then last, the idea of thank offering is exhibited more fully to the apprehension in the feast of thank offering and in the fellowship that ensued.

Of the sin offering, by which atonement was made, the priests might eat, as a token of their fellowship with God through the atonement. The Lord's Supper is our fellowship in the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ which has done away with sin forever. Of the thank offering in which dedication to God was shown forth, the offerer himself might also eat in recognition of his fellowship with God in this dedication. The Lord's Supper is a communion with Christ, not only because He offered Himself up for us, but because in and with Him we offer ourselves to the Father with all that we have.

Marvelous union: Jesus offers Himself to me: I offer myself to Him: Jesus gives Himself wholly for me: I give myself wholly for Him. My sacrifice is the counterpart, the reflection, of His.

With what earnestness did He prepare Himself for the fulfillment of His sacrifice, in order that His will might really yield itself completely and wholly to the Father. As for me, how much more need have I of preparation for asking whether, while I take a whole Christ for myself, I yield myself with my whole life to Him.

"Let every one examine his heart." Believer, the observance of the Supper is a glorious opportunity of renewed dedication to your Lord. Let the Holy Spirit discover to you what it is to be a decided Christian: undividingly, unceasingly surrendered to Jesus in heart and hand and lips, at home and in society; living for Jesus, working zealously for Jesus; a burnt offering which is given entirely for God, and is consumed by the fire of the Spirit. In this spirit, prepare yourself to be willingly bound to the horns of the altar.

PRAYER.

My Father, Thou callest me to Thy table to participate by faith anew in the sacrifice of Thy Son: I cry to Thee, in turn, to make me partaker of the power, the inclination, and the spirit of His self-sacrifice, that I, in fellowship with Him, may in like manner offer myself up to Thee. "Through the Eternal Spirit He offered Himself up to God." My God, let the same Spirit make me also, on my part, a complete offering to Thee.

My Father, grant unto me to see that self-offering constitutes the essence and the worth of His sacrifice. Let the surrender of my feeling and will to the will of God be the mark of my piety. Yea, Lord, let me live as one who offers himself wholly to the desire of God and man to further Thine honor and their salvation.

My Father, at the Supper I desire truly to present myself as a living, holy sacrifice, well pleasing, to God–an offering that shall be wholly consumed.

For this end I entreat Thee for grace to prepare myself for this sacrifice, as Thy Son prepared Himself for the sacrifice on Golgotha by saying in Gethsemane: "Not My will, but Thine be done." So would I offer myself as a sacrifice to Thee with the complete surrender of my will: may Thy will be all in all to me, O my God. Lord enable me to say in truth: "I live only to do the will of God." In the strength of Jesus Christ, who liveth in me and in whom I offer myself to Thee, I venture to make His language my own: "Lo I come to do Thy will, O God!"

Lord, prepare me also to say: I desire here before Thee to renounce every known and unknown sin. All self-seeking and self-will I desire to abandon before Thee. I take Jesus Christ as my holiness, my strength, my victory ; and in virtue of the new nature which He has prepared for me, I say: Father, no more sin, but Thy will only–Thy will wholly, Thy will always and in all.

Lord Jesus, who didst give Thyself for me, I give myself to Thee. Yea, Lord, in this very moment, where I in solitude am this morning preparing myself for the Supper, I say before heaven and earth: Jesus, Son of God, I will give myself wholly to Thee, to live now and henceforth only for Thee. Lord Jesus, I do this now. And as one who is offered to the Father and to Thee, I will go to the Supper table, there to be confirmed in the faith and confession; I am no longer my own I have been bought with a high price: I will glorify God in my body and my spirit, which are God's.

SATURDAY EVENING

A Prayer for the Holy Spirit

Lord God, I thank Thee heartily that Thou hast led me throughout this week of preparation, and that I can now cherish the hope of eating with Thee and Thy Son on the morrow at the Table of the Covenant. I thank Thee for every opportunity of meditation and prayer, so that I may not thoughtlessly appear in the sanctuary. In this quiet evening hour, I come once more to Thee to beseech Thee for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Lord God, Thou hast taught us to say that without Him there can be no true prayer, no real fellowship with Thyself. Therefore hast Thou given to every one of Thy children the Holy Spirit, by whom they may have access in Christ to the Father. Lord, what I would entreat of Thee is this: that the Spirit may now work mightily in me, so as to impart to me all the dispositions by which I may draw near to Thee in the holy adornment of Thy chosen ones. I know that I have only been all too unfaithful to Him. Father, forgive me, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.

May He convince me anew of sin. May He work in me true penitence, so that I may remember my sinfulness with a contrite heart. O Lord, my God, I desire this evening to remember, to confess, and to cast away every sin that still cleaves to me. (Here the believing suppliant may think of his own special sins, confess them, and abjure them before God.) I would think with loathing on myself and the deep aversion of my nature from God, and would forever renounce all confidence in myself, and all satisfaction with myself. Lord God, let the Holy Spirit so work in me, and spiritually so renew me, that all sin shall become more and more hateful and intolerable; and that in like manner, through the spiritual acknowledgement of my corrupt nature, I may meet with Thee in a more humble and tender spirit. May a sweet, blessed lowliness of mind be the fruit of a rich indwelling of the Spirit in my heart.

And Lord, in like manner may the result of Thine own Spirit's operation in me be a strong, a joyful faith, that a full Christ, with all His promises and all His blessings, is inwardly appropriated and enjoyed. Yea, my God, may the Spirit bring out in me that fruit which in the sight of man seems so undesirable–the humility of one who feels himself worthy only of rejection, coupled with the gladness of one who is redeemed, who is a beloved child.

May He also discover to me, and shed abroad in me, the eternal love of our God, so that my experience of His personal affection for me may be a thousandfold clearer and more certain than the affection of any man on earth. O Lord, the Holy Spirit can effect this. He can bring down from heaven into my soul the love of God as a real gift: grant that this gift may be near at this time of communion. Lord, I depend upon Thy promise; I wait for the mighty working of the Spirit.

Then shall my love burst out into a flame at the Table. Then shall I behold the countenance of my Lord, and my whole heart shall be won by Him. Then shall my surrender to the Lord be a real and effectual one. Blessed God, withhold not from me, but bestow on me in large measure, the mighty operations of Thy Holy Spirit. Thou hast given Him to be in me: may He now fill me. Then shall my observance of the Supper be truly a fellowship of the Spirit with the Father and the Son. Then shall I have not only heavenly blessing around me and in me, but also heavenly life in me, both to know and to receive all His blessing.

Lord, I depend upon Thy promises: I set myself now in silence before Thee to wait for the Spirit: I give myself to Him in the faith that He will work in me. I ask this One boon besides: that in Thy servant who presides over the congregation, and in the congregation itself, Thy blessed Spirit, with His silent heavenly power, may be mightily at work, so that this festal time may be for all a time of great blessing. Would that some who are still dead may now be made alive.

Lord, grant this for the sake of Thy Son. Amen.

PART II

The Communion Sabbath

Here, O my Lord, I see Thee face to face;
Here would I touch and handle things unseen;
Here grasp with firmer hand and eternal grace
And all my weariness upon Thee lean.

Here would I feed upon the bread of God,
Here drink with Thee the royal wine of Heaven;
Here would I lay aside each earthly load,
Here taste afresh the calm of sin forgiven.

This is the hour of banquet and of song;
This is the Heavenly table spread for me;
Here let me feast, and feasting still prolong
The brief, bright hour of fellowship with Thee.
–Horatius Bonar

THE MORNING OF THE LORD'S DAY

An Exercise of Faith

Beloved Lord Jesus, to Thee is the desire of my soul. Thou art He in whom the love of the Father is disclosed to me. Thou art He who hast loved me even unto death on earth, and still lovest me in Thy glory on high. Thou art He in whom alone my soul has its life. Beloved Lord Jesus, my soul cleaves hard to Thee. On this holy morning I will prepare myself to go to the table by exercising and confessing anew my faith in Thee. My Saviour, do Thou Thyself come into me: my faith can only be the fruit of what Thou givest me to know of Thyself.

My Saviour, I come to Thee this morning, as aforetime, with the confession that there is nothing in myself on which I can lean. All my experiences confirm to me what Thou hast said of my corruption: that in me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing. And yet I come to Thee to lay my claim before Thee, to let it prevail with Thee, and to take Thee as mine own. O, my Lord, my claim rests on the word of my Father, that He has given His Son for sinners, that Thou didst die for the ungodly. My sinfulness is my claim upon Thee: Thou art for sinners. My claim is God's eternal righteousness: the Surety has paid; the guilty must go free. My claim rests on Thy love: Thou hast compassion on the wretched. My claim is Thy faithfulness: O, my Saviour, I have given myself to Thee and Thou hast received me, and what Thou hast begun in me, Thou wilt gloriously complete. That which has passed betwixt Thee and me gives me increased courage; and now I come to take Thee as mine, and enjoy Thee, with all Thou art and hast. Blessed Lord, unveil Thyself to me, in order that my faith may be truly strong and joyful.

Yes: Lord Jesus, Thou art mine: with all Thy fulness Thou art mine. God be praised, I can say this: Thy blood is mine: it has atoned for all, yea all, my sins. Thy righteousness is mine; yea, Thou Thyself art my righteousness, and makest me altogether acceptable to the Father. Thy love is mine: yea, in all its height and depth and length and breadth is Thy love mine, O Jesus: it is the habitation in which I abide, the very air I breathe. And all that Thou hast is mine. Thy wisdom is mine; Thy strength is mine; Thy holiness is mine; Thy life is mine; Thy glory is mine; Thy Father is mine. Beloved Lord Jesus, my soul has only one desire this day: that Thou, my Almighty Friend, wouldst make me with a silent but very powerful activity of faith to behold Thee, and inwardly appropriate Thee as my possession. Lord Jesus, in the simplicity of a faith that depends only on Thee, I say: God be praised, Jesus with all His fulness is mine. How little do I yet thoroughly know or enjoy this truth: Jesus with all His fulness is mine.

Help me now, Lord, to go to Thy table in the blessed expectation of new communications out of the treasures of Thy love. Let my faith be not only strong, but large: may it cause me to open my mouth wide.

I have so much of which I stand in need today. But what I need above all is this: that I may know my Lord as the daily food of my soul, and that I may comprehend how He will every day be my strength and my life. My desire is that I may understand that not only at the Lord's Supper, but every hour of my life on earth, my Lord Jesus is willing to take the responsibility of my life, to be my life, and to live His life in me. O Jesus, do enable me to grasp this truth today.

Beloved Lord, I believe that Thou hast the power to work this in me. I know that Thy love is waiting for me, and will take great delight in doing this for me. I believe, Lord, and Thou wilt come to help my unbelief. Yea, although I do not as yet thoroughly understand it, I will believe that my Jesus will this day communicate Himself anew to me as my life, and wilt give me, through the operation of His Holy Spirit, a larger participation of His heavenly life which He lives on high. I will believe that what He this day does, He will every day henceforth confirm. Yea, my precious Saviour, I will this day betake me with all my misery, and make myself over to Thee to dwell in me. And I will believe that Thou, because Thou art wholly my possession, wilt make myself ready and come in and take possession of me, and fill me with Thyself. Lord, I believe: increase this faith within me.

And now, Lord, prepare me and all Thy congregation for a blessed observance of the Supper. Now, unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus, unto all generations forever and ever. Amen.

I.

Take Eat

"Take, eat; this is My body which is given for you." –Matthew 26:26; Luke 22:19.

When the Lord says this, He points out to us that His body is not so much His as it is ours, since He received it and suffered it to be broken on the cross, not for His own sake, but for ours; and that He now also desires that we should look upon it and appropriate it as our own possession. Thus, with His body, He gives Himself to us, and desires that we should take Him. The fellowship of the Lord's Supper is a fellowship of giving and taking. Blessed giving: blessed taking.

Blessed giving: the person gives value to the gift. Who is He that gives? It is my Creator, who comes here to give what my soul needs. It is my Redeemer, who, at the table, will give to me in possession what He has purchased for me.

And what gives He? His body and His blood. He gives the greatest and the best He can bestow: yea, all that it is possible for Him to give–the broken body which He first offered to the Father as a sacrifice for sin, a sacrifice that filled Him with joy. And what He offered to the Father, to put away sin before Him, He now offers to me, to put away sin in me.

And wherefore gives He this? Because He loves me. He desires to redeem me from death, and to bestow on me eternal life in Himself. He gives Himself to me to be the food, the joy, the living power of my soul. O blessed, Heavenly giving of eternal love! Jesus gives me His own body: Jesus gives me Himself.

And not less blessed taking, for it is so simple. Just as I receive with my hand the bread that is intended for me, and hold it before me as my own, so by faith in the word, in which Jesus gives Himself to me, I take Him for myself, and I know that He is really mine. The body in which He suffered for sin is my possession: the power of His atonement is mine. The body of Jesus is my food and my life.

And how free is the taking. I think of my unworthiness, only to find in it my claim on Him, the Righteous One, who died for the unrighteous. I think of my misery only as the poverty and the hunger for which the festal repast is prepared, this divine bread so cordially given. What Jesus in His love would give so heartily and willingly, I will as heartily and freely take.

And so real is the taking. Where God gives, there is power and life. In giving, there is a communication, a real participation of that which is bestowed. Consequently, my taking does not depend on my strength: I have only to receive what my Saviour brings to me and inwardly imparts. I, a mere worm, take what He, the Almighty, gives. Blessed giving, blessed taking.
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Blessed God, may my taking be in conformity with Thy giving; Thy giving, the standard and the measure of my taking. What God gives, I take as a whole. As Thou givest, so I also receive, –heartily, undividedly, lovingly. Precious Saviour, my taking depends wholly on Thy giving.

Come Thou and give: give Thyself truly and with power in the communion of the Spirit. Come, my eternal Redeemer, and let Thy love delight itself and be satisfied in me, whilst Thou dost unfold to me the divine secret of the word: My body given for you. Yea, Lord, I wait upon Thee. What thou givest me as my share in Thy broken body, that will I take and eat. And my soul shall go hence, joyful and strengthened, to thank Thee and to serve Thee. Amen.

II.

In Remembrance of Me

"Do this in remembrance of Me." –Luke 22:19

Do this in remembrance of me." Is this injunction, then, really necessary? Can it be possible that I should forget Jesus?

Forget Jesus! Jesus, who thought of me in eternity; who, indeed, forgot His own sorrows on the Cross, but never forgets mine; who says to me that a mother will sooner forget her sucking child than He in heaven will forget me. Can I forget Jesus? Jesus, my Sun, my Surety, my Bridegroom; my Jesus, without whose love I cannot live: can I ever forget Jesus?

Ah, me! how often have I forgotten Jesus. How frequently has my foolish heart grieved Him and prepared all manner of sorrow for itself by forgetting Jesus. At one time it was in the hour of care, or sin, or grief, at another in prosperity and joy, that I suffered myself to be led astray. O my soul, be deeply ashamed that Thou shouldst ever forget Jesus.

And Jesus will not be forgotten. He will see to it that this shall not take place for His own sake. He loves us so dearly that He sets great store by our love, and cannot endure to be forgotten. Our love is to Him His happiness and joy: He requires it from us with a holy strictness: He cannot endure to be forgotten. So truly has the eternal Love chosen us that it longs to live in our remembrance every day.

For our sakes also He will see to it that He is not forgotten. By the memory, through this kind of remembrance, the past becomes the present in perspective. Jesus always yearns to be with us and beside us, that He may make us taste of His crucified love and the power of His heavenly life. Jesus wills that we should always remember Him.

How I long never more to forget Jesus. Thank God, Jesus will so give Himself to me at the table that He shall become to me one never to be forgotten. At the table He will overshadow and satisfy me with His love. He will make His love to me so glorious that my love shall always hold Him in remembrance. What is more, He will so unite Himself with me, will so give His life in me, that out of the power of His own indwelling in me it will not be possible for me to forget Him. I have too much considered it a duty and a work to remember Jesus. Lord Jesus, so fill me with Thy joy that it will be an impossibility for me not to remember Thee.

Jesus remembers me with such a tender love that He desires and will grant that the remembrance of Him shall always live in me. It is for this end that He gives me the new remembrance of His love in the Lord's Supper. I will draw near to it in this joyful assurance: Jesus will there teach me to remember Him always.

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My Lord, how wonderful is this Thy love: that it should be a matter of deep interest to Thee to be Held in remembrance by us, and that Thou shouldst always desire to live in our remembrance in our love. Thou knowest, Lord, that it is not by any force my heart can be taught to remember Thee. But if by Thy love Thou dwellest in me, thinking of Thee becomes a joy, –no effort or trouble, but the sweetest rest. Lord, my soul praises Thee for the wonderful grace of the Supper. First, Thou givest Thyself in Thine eternal and unchangeable love as the daily food of our souls, and then Thou dost charge us, out of the power of Thy promised presence, wherewith Thou wilt feed us, not to forget Thee. Now I dare promise it. O my Lord, at Thy table, give Thou Thyself to my soul as its food, be every day my food, and Thy love shall keep the thought of Thee ever living. Then shall I never forget Thee; no, not for a single moment. For then I shall have no life save in Thy love. Amen.

III.

My Blood

"And He took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood." "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ?" –Matthew 26:27, 28; 1 Corinthians 10:16.

F the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life" (Leviticus 27:11). For the blood is the life, the living spirit; and therefore atonement is linked with the shedding of blood. It was the surrender of the life of an innocent animal in the place of guilty man. And thus with the shedding of Jesus' blood, His life is surrendered for our sins. The worth and the power of that blood are the worth and the power of the life of Jesus. Every drop of that blood has in it the power of an endless life.

Jesus gives me His blood. When I become partaker of that blood, I have part in the atonement which it established, the forgiveness which it secured. I have part in all that wonderful suffering in which it was shed. I have part in all the love of which that suffering and that bloodshedding were the revelation. I have part in that life which is in the blood and is in it first surrendered and then taken up again. I have part in the life of Jesus, surrendered upon the Cross, raised from the grave and now glorified in heaven. O glorious wonders of grace which lie hid in that word: "Drink, for this is My blood."

The blood of Jesus is my drink of life. Jesus' love is the power of my life. The spirit of Jesus' life is the spirit of my life.
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O my God, help me to conceive these wonders.

How powerful, how heavenly must that life be which is nourished by the New Wine of the kingdom and has communion with the blood of God's Son, not only by cleansing, but also by drinking.
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Blessed Jesus, who hast loved me so wonderfully, Thou wilt not deny me the request which I now state to Thee: unfold to me the secret of Thy life in me which Thou bestowest upon me, when from above Thou still givest me to drink the blood shed for the forgiveness of my sins. Most precious Saviour, illumine and enlarge my faith, that I may now realize this truth: Jesus' own life is in my innermost being, the life of my life. He "through His own blood entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption" with the Father. Through Thine own blood come Thou to my heart to bring in this redemption there also. Lord Jesus, my heart thirsts for Thee. Come this day to me with that precious blood and let the full power of it be unveiled to me by Thyself. Let it quench my thirst. Let it cleanse me from all unrighteousness. Let it bring me into harmony with the joy and praise of those who sing: "Unto Him that loveth us and loosed us from our sins by His blood, to Him be the glory and the dominion forever." Amen.

IV.

The New Covenant

"And the cup in like manner after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood." –Luke 22:20.

The Lord's Supper is a covenant meal–the Feast of the New Covenant. It is of great importance to understand the New Covenant thoroughly.

It is something quite different from the Old Covenant–infinitely better and more glorious. The Old Covenant which God made with Israel was indeed glorious, but yet not adapted for sinful man, because he could not fulfill it. God gave to His people His perfect law, with the glorious promises of His help, His guidance, His blessing, if they should continue in the observance of it. But man in his inner life was still under the power of sin: he was lacking in the strength requisite for abiding in the covenant of His God.

God promised to make a New Covenant. (Read with care Jeremiah 31:31-34, 33:38-42; Hebrews 8:6-14.) In this New Covenant, God promised to bestow the most complete forgiveness of sins and to take man altogether into His favor. He further promised to communicate to him His law, not externally as written on tables, but inwardly and in his heart, so that he should have strength to fulfill its precepts. He was to give him a new heart and a new spirit–in truth, His own Holy Spirit. Man was not called on in the first instance to promise that he would walk in God's law. God rather took the initiative in promising that He would enable him to do so. "I will put My Spirit within you," said the Lord by Ezekiel (36:27), "and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments and do them."

Of this New Covenant, Jesus is the Mediator and Surety (Heb. 12:22, 8:6). As Surety, He stands pledged to us to secure that God will fulfill all His promises. As Surety, He is no less pledged to God in our behalf that we shall keep God's commandments. Glorious covenant of grace, with its wonderful provision for all our needs. In the Lord Jesus, God saw it meet to establish this covenant, without fear that His rights would suffer any violation. God could rely upon His Son to see to it that His honor should be respected. And in Jesus I also may well dare to enter into this covenant, without fear that I shall not be able to fulfill it: I can rely upon Jesus to see to it that He will bring everything to completion for and in me. In the New Covenant, Jesus the Surety has not only wholly discharged the old debt, but also undertaken the responsibility for whatever else may be still required in our case.
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In this New Covenant, I this day surrender myself to Thee, O my God. Thou wilt bind me to Thyself with Thy glorious promises. Thou bindest Thyself to forgive my sins, to love me as Thy child, to train, to sanctify, to bless me; to give me light, and desire, and strength for abiding in Thy covenant and doing Thy will. And I am bound to Thee in Thy precious Son. Eternal God, grant that the Holy Spirit, who is one of the promises of this New Covenant, may this day unfold to me what Thy love has destined for me in it. Wilt Thou make me to understand that Thou hast undertaken and promised to secure that I shall walk in Thy ways, and that Thou givest me Thy Son as the Surety of the Covenant to carry out all its details? Then shall I take Thy Son and the Covenant sealed with His blood, with the blessed joy of knowing that He will be in me the fulfilling of the covenant, the fulfilling as well of Thy covenant promises as of my covenant obligations.

Blessed Jesus, reach to me this day the blood of the covenant. Amen.

V.

Unto Remission of Sins

"My blood, which is shed unto remission of sins." –Matthew 26:28.

Sin: at the Lord's Table, this word is not to be dispensed with. It is sin that gives us a right to Christ. It is as a Saviour from sin that Christ desires to have to do with us. It is as sinners that we sit down at the table. If I cannot always come immediately to Christ and appropriate Him, I can always come on the ground of my sin. Sin is the handle by which I can take hold of Christ. I may not always be able actually to lay my hand on Christ and say: Christ is mine; but I can always say: Sin is mine. And when I then hear the glad tidings that Christ died for sin, I obtain courage to say: Sin is mine, and Christ, who died for sin, died also for me. When I look upon my own righteousness, I have no courage: but when I first look on sin, I can make bold to say that Christ is mine. Sin: how sweet it is to me to hear that word from the month of Jesus at the table.

And what does my Saviour say about sin? He speaks of it only to give the assurance of the forgiveness of sin. That God no more remembers my sin and does not impute it to me, that He does not desire to look upon my sin and deal with me in deserved wrath, but meets me in love and complacency as one whose sin is taken away: that is what my Jesus secures for me, where He points me to His blood and gives it to me as my own. And that is what thou mayest believe and enjoy, O my soul, when thou drinkest that blood. And when Thou askest Him to make known to thee by His Holy Spirit the divine glory of this forgiveness as complete, effectual, entire, always valid and eternal, then shalt thou, too, be able to sing: "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven."

Then shall you also see how this forgiveness as a living seed includes in itself all other blessings. For to whom God forgives sin, him He also receives, him He loves, him He acknowledges as a child, and gives him the Holy Spirit with all His gifts. The forgiveness of sin is, as it were, the pledge of entrance into the whole riches of the grace of God. The soul that day by day really enjoys forgiveness in the Lord Jesus shall go hence in the joy and power of the Lord.

O what a blessed feast: to know myself to be one with Jesus as a ransomed soul, and, being in Him, to be able to look out upon my sin: this is true blessedness. Blessed it is, because there, while He points with His finger to the sin for which I must be so bitterly ashamed, I can hear this glorious word: "Forgiven." Blessed, because, for the confirmation of this forgiveness and the communication of all its blessing, I am there nourished by the very blood which was shed for remission of sins. Blessed, because in the joy of the forgiveness and the enjoyment of that blood, I am anew linked with that Jesus who loves me so wonderfully. Yea, blessed, because I know that in place of sins He now gives me Himself to fill my empty heart, in order that it be adorned with the light and the beauty of His own life. Blessed feast, blessed drinking unto remission of sins!
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Precious Saviour, I am naturally so afraid to look upon my sins, to acknowledge, to combat them. In the joy and the power of Thy forgiveness, I dread this no more. Now I can look upon them as a victor. Help me to love Thee much, as one to whom much has been forgiven. Amen.

VI.

For Many

"My blood, which was shed for many." –Matthew 26:28

Jesus has a large heart. At the Supper Table, He not only forgot Himself, to think of His own who were gathered there around Him, but His loving eye glanced forward to all who are redeemed by His blood. "For Many": with this word He teaches His disciples to maintain fellowship, not merely with those with whom they sit at the table, but with the entire host of the redeemed–the multitude that no man can number. In the light of this word we see Him breaking, the bread and giving it to the disciples, and then again to the multitude after the day of Pentecost, and then yet again to others until the everwidening circle extends to the spot where we now sit. This truth binds all cerebrations of the Supper into one single communion in immediate contact with Him who first instituted it. It unites also the separate circles of Christ's disciples into one universal Church, and all distinction and all separation vanish in the joyful thought that every member shares equally in the love and the life of the one Head from whom also He receives the bread. It sets the farthest distant in a relation to the love of Jesus as intimate as those who at the first received the broad from His own hand.

The observance of the Supper accordingly must renew our feeling of unity not only with the Head, but also with the Body of which we are members. The Supper must enlarge our heart, till it be as wide as the heart of Jesus. Next to love to the Lord Jesus must present love to the brethren fill our souls. Along with the word, "For you," which, as coming from His lips, is so precious to us, He desires us to couple and remember this other word, "For many."

"For many:" some Christians are satisfied when all goes well with their own little circle: they think of going to heaven only in company with those that belong to them. This ought not to be. The Supper must enlarge the heart in love and prayer for all that belong to Jesus, so as to make us rejoice with them or weep with them. Nor even at this point must we stop. The true disciple of Jesus thinks of all who may yet be in their sin, and do not know about the blood which was shed "for many." Every real experience of the power of the blood must introduce me more deeply into the feelings and dispositions in which it was shed, and will constrain me to bring to the knowledge of it, the "many," for whom Christ poured it out. He that really drinks the blood which was shed "for many," and becomes inwardly partaker of the life and the love which was poured forth in that blood–how shall he find all selfishness and all narrow-mindedness vanishing, away, and have his heart enlarged to embrace the wide compass of Jesus' heart and Jesus' word, when He said: "My blood, shed for many."
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Precious Saviour, grant unto me Thy Spirit, that the Same mind which is in Thee may be also in me. Cause me to understand how even of Thy holy Supper thou canst say: "Compel them to come in, that My house may be full." And may all Thy people be more filled with the thought: "Still there is room." O Lord Jesus, who Thyself art love, shed abroad Thy love in our hearts by Thy Holy Spirit. Amen.

VII.

For You

> "My body, which is given for you. . . . My blood, which is shed for you." – Luke 22:19, 20.

It is an old saying: The whole secret of true blessedness lies in one word, the little word "Me." All knowledge of the truth, and all acquaintance with the gospel, are of no avail without the personal appropriation of that short phrase, For me. And that word of man has, on the other hand, its foundation in the word of Jesus, "For you."

So was it at the Lord's Table. In speaking of His body and blood, the Saviour addressed His disciples, and said to them: Given for you; shed for you.

How would the disciples in a later day feel themselves strengthened by that word. How could Peter in his deep fall, and Thomas in his grievous unbelief, and each of the others, fail to encourage themselves by remembering this: He spoke to me so cordially, just indeed as if it was meant for me alone, when He said: "Given for you."

It is in this word that for me also the richest blessing of the Lord's Supper is wrapt up. For, not less than to the first disciples, does the Saviour desire to say to every one of His guests: Given for you. By His Holy Spirit, He is as near to us as to them: He can make us feel the power of His eye and His voice. Not only by reaching the bread to each one separately, but much more by the heavenly operation of His Holy Spirit, will Jesus address each one, saying: Given for you.

Affecting word: how must it humble and subdue my heart. There sits the Son of God in His glory. There I bow myself in the dust, I who have been an enemy and ungodly, who am still all too much unfaithful and a transgressor. And, behold, with an eye in which holy earnestness is mingled with tender love, He points me to His broken body and shed blood, and says to me: For you, for you.
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Lord, it is enough for that precious word my soul thanks Thee. That word I will lay hold of, and find in it confidence to return the answer: Yes, for me, for me; "for many," but yet also for me. The love, and the redemption, and the life, and the glory of which that blood speaks, I dare say of all: For me, for me.

Precious Jesus, my soul praises Thee for that loving word: For you. Hear my supplication, and let Thy Spirit at Thy table address it to me very powerfully. O strengthen me for a very confident and joyful appropriation of all that Thou sayest, and when my hand takes the bread, and I drink the wine, grant me with a very large and clear faith to say: For me, for me. Blessed Lord, I shall wait in silence for Thy Spirit; for to have that word from Thee is to me the secret of my blessing at the table. And Thou will give it to me. Amen.

VIII.

One Body

> "We who are many are one body: for we all partake of the one bread." "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." –1 Corinthians 10:17; John 13:34, 35.

Union with the Lord Jesus, the Head, involves at the same time mutual union with the members of the body. He that really eats the body of Jesus and drinks His blood, is incorporated with His body, and stands thenceforth in the closest relationship to the whole body, with all its members. We have fellowship, not only in His body which He gave up to death, but especially in His body which He brought again from the dead–that is, the Church. "We are one body; for we all partake of the one bread."

So deep and wonderful was this union of His believing disciples at the table of the New Covenant, so entirely new the life of the Spirit by which they were to be gathered together into one in Him as His body, that the Lord spoke of the love which must animate them as a new commandment. In the New Covenant there was present a new life, and thus also a new love. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."

This thought is too much forgotten at the Lord's Table, and that to the great loss of the Church. How often have guests at Jesus' Table sat next [to] one another for years in concession without knowing or loving one another, without holding fellowship with one another, or helping one another. Many a one has sought after closer connection with the Lord and not found it, because they would have the Head alone without the body. Many a blessing has been missed and lost at the Supper, because the unity of the body was never considered. Yes: would that were it thoroughly understood; Jesus must be loved, and honored, and served, and known in His members. As by the circulation of the blood every member of our body is kept unceasingly in the most vital connection with the others, so the body of Christ can increase and become strong only when, in the loving interchange of the fellowship of the Spirit and of love, the life of the Head can flow unhindered from member to member. The observance of the Supper must be regarded as the conclusion of an alliance, not only with the Lord, but with all that sit at the table, to the effect that we shall live for one another. Not only must love to Him whose bread I eat be the object of desire, and promise, and prayer, but ,also His love to all who eat that bread along with me there.

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Blessed Lord, grant unto me to feel this truth aright. As really as in this bread which Thou dost impart to me, I maintain fellowship with Thee, I maintain it also with those with whom I share the bread at the table. As I receive Thee, so do I receive them. As I desire to confess, and love, and serve Thee, so would I also them. As I would be wholly one with Thee, so would I also with them. Very humbly do I acknowledge before Thee the sins of my old nature–selfishness, lovelessness, envy, wrath) indifference about others. Boldly and trustfully I entreat Thee for the love, the gentleness, the mercy, that are in Thee, to be shed abroad also in me. O Jesus, who givest Thyself to me, work in me and with me in all who eat of this one bread with me, Thine own heavenly love. Amen.

IX.

The Cup of Blessing

"The cup of blessing which we bless." –1 Corinthians 10:16. [The Dutch version has: "The cup of thanksgiving which we bless with thanksgiving." –Translator]

The, Lord's Supper is properly a feast of thanksgiving. "When He had given thanks, He brake the bread." "In like manner He took the cup, and, when He had given thanks, He gave it to them." And after partaking of the Supper, it was "when they had sung an hymn," that they went out to the Mount of Olives. From Jewish writers, we also learn that the third cup of the Paschal feast, which was sanctified as the cup of the New Covenant, bore the name of the Cup of Thanksgiving, and that it was while it was being drunk that Psalms 116-118 were sung.

The Supper is a solemnity of redemption, the feast of the redeemed, a joyful repast at which God Himself says to us: "Let us eat and be merry"; a thanksgiving banquet at which is heard a prelude of the song of the Lamb. Let me ask grace to sit down joyfully and thankfully.

So shall I honor God. "He that offereth praise glorifieth Me." God is too little honored by His people. A joyful, thankful Christian shows that God can make those that serve Him truly happy. He stirs up others to praise God along with him.

So shall I enjoy the Supper aright. Sadness cannot eat; a joyful heart enjoys food. To be thankful for what I have received and for what my Lord has prepared, is the surest way to receive more.

So shall I be strengthened for conflict and for victory. "Thanks be to God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ." "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." If my Saviour went singing from the Lord's Table to the conflict in Gethsemane, may I, in the joy of His redemption, follow Him with thanksgiving into every conflict to which He calls me.

So shall the Spirit of heaven dwell in my heart. The nearer to the throne of God the more thanksgiving. This I see in the Revelation. In heaven they praise God day and night: a Lord's Supper pervaded by the spirit of thanksgiving is a foretaste of it.

And thou hast good cause to be thankful, O my soul. Look at Jesus, at His blood, at His redemption, at His love, at His blessed fellowship; and let all that is within thee praise Him. Drink, yea, drink abundantly, of the cup of thanksgiving, which we drink, giving thanks.

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Blessed Lord, my Redeemer and my Friend, humbly I pray Thee: let my mouth be filled with Thy praise, all the day with Thy glory. Thou art in very truth our strength and song, for Thou hast become our salvation. Lord, teach me this day to take and drink the cup with thanksgiving, and to be joyful before Thy face. For this end, Thou hast only to unveil Thyself to me in the love that streams from Thy countenance, and the glorious redemption which Thou bringest, and my soul shall be suffused with joy. Is it not just for this end that thou didst institute the Supper? Precious Saviour, with thanksgiving shall I take the cup into my hand, in the blessed assurance that Thou wilt fill me with Thy love, my heart with Thy joy, my mouth with Thy praise. Praise the Lord, my soul, who satisfiest thy mouth with good things. Amen.

X.

Till He Come

> "Ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come." "I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." "I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as My Father appointed unto Me, that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom." –1 Corinthians 11:26; Matthew 26:29; Luke 22:29, 30.

At the Supper, Jesus points us not only backward, but also forward. >From the suffering He points to the glory; out of the depths He calls to the heights. Because the Supper is the remembrance, the communion of Jesus, the living Saviour, it sets Him before us in all that He was, and is, and shall be. It is only in the future that we can expect to have the full realization of what is begun at the Lord's Supper. The Supper begins under the Cross with the reconciliation of the world; it is completed before the throne of glory in the new birth of the world. It is on this account that faith, according as it has experience of the power of the heavenly food, is irresistibly drawn on to the future. The true Christian has still to wait for his inheritance. "Till He come" is his watchword at every observance of the Supper. At the table his Lord speaks of drinking the fruit of the vine anew in the kingdom of the Father, and of eating and drinking at His table in His kingdom. The Supper, which is itself the fulfillment of the shadow of the Paschal Feast, is again in its turn the shadow of coming blessings, the pledge of the time when they shall cry: "Blessed are they that are called to the marriage Supper of the Lamb."

What a prospect is this. There sin is for ever put away. There the whole Church is eternally united without fault or division. There the whole creation shares in the liberty of the glory of the children of God. There the eye sees the King in His beauty; and we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Blessed thought: it shall not always be as it is now. The blessings of the Supper are mere droppings. Jesus Himself comes once for all. Then shall I sit down with Him. Yes, He comes: and I shall see Him and know Him, and He shall see me and know me. And when I fall at His feet He will call me by my name and let me rest on His breast, and take me to be one with Him inseparably and forever.

A Prayer of Thanksgiving to the Holy Trinity

(For the Communion Sabbath Evening)

Triune, God, once again on this blessed feast day I come to pour out my full heart before Thee. I will lift up my soul to Thee in prayer and supplication, and will enjoy anew what Thou hast bestowed upon me, while I praise Thee for it.

Receive my thanks, God and Father of the Lord Jesus, for the wonderful love Thou hast showed to me. That Thou hast prepared for me in Thine heart a place next Thine only-begotten Son, that Thou hast seen meet to honor me with the name and the rights of a child, that Thou hast been pleased to seal to me this privilege all this day by imparting to me the children's; bread: for this my soul desires to praise Thee. O my Father, I will place myself anew before Thee as Thy child, to delight myself in Thee, to dedicate myself to Thee as a living sacrifice: O my Father, to live wholly for Thee, to honor Thee the whole day with a heart full of joy in Thyself, to keep myself ever burning on the altar as a thank offering by fire: how my heart longs after this. Father, receive the praise, the thanks, the love of the child whom Thou hast this day blessed, and grant me grace to walk from day to day with this song in my heart: "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift."

And what shall I say unto Thee, O my Jesus, Son of the Father, for what I have this day again received from Thee. O how I praise Thee for the love wherewith Thou hast loved me. Precious Saviour, Thou hast given Thyself unto me to be mine forever. The bond that unites Thee to me is not broken in eternity; for the bond is Thy love, which is stronger than death. Yea, the bond which Thy love has formed is Thine own Divine life. The life that is in Thee, Thou hast given to be in me: Thou hast made me one with Thyself: I am Thy flesh and bone. Son of God, my soul cannot conceive it: I can only bow in abasement, and surrender myself anew to Thee. O my Lord, Thou desirest to have me wholly: here am I to be wholly taken possession of by Thee, and to be filled with the Spirit whom Thou hast given.

And how shall I praise Thee, O Spirit of the Father and the Son, for what Thou art to me again this day. By Thee I possess and enjoy the Father and the Son. By Thee I taste the powers of the heavenly life. Every blessing which I receive from the Father and the Son I have through Thee. Thou workest in me by Thy Divine power all that I need in the spiritual life. What I have this day received and enjoyed, that Thou hast wrought in me; that Thou wilt preserve and strengthen, till I become fully partaker of the love of the Father and the grace of the Son. O Holy Spirit of God, my soul praises Thee. How long-suffering and patient hast Thou been in spite of all my sluggishness and folly. With the Father and the Son I honor Thee, I love Thee, I delight in Thee and in Thy fellowship.

Triune God of the Covenant, receive this renewed dedication of myself to Thee. Thou art all my salvation, my everlasting portion. O confirm in the most effectual way the sealing of Thy grace bestowed upon me this day, and let me now as Thy sworn ally go hence in the might of the Lord and making mention of Thy righteousness, yea, Thine alone. Amen.

PART III

The Week after the Supper

Too soon we rise: the symbols disappear.
The feast, though not the love, is past and gone;
The bread and wine remove, but thou art here,
Nearer than ever, still my Shield and Sun.

I have no help but thine: nor do I need
Another arm save Thine to lean upon;
It is enough, my Lord, enough indeed;
My strength is in Thy might, Thy might alone.

Mine is the sin, but Thine the righteousness;
Mine is the guilt, but thine the cleansing blood;
Here is my robe, my refuge and my peace–
Thy blood, Thy righteousness, O Lord my God.

Feast after feast thus comes and passes by,
Yet, passing, points to the glad feast above,
Giving sweet foretaste of the festal joy,
The Lamb's great bridal feast of bliss and love.
–Horatius Bonar.

MONDAY MORNING

The Power of the Food

"My flesh is meat indeed and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me and I in Him." –John 6:55.

Life must be fed with life. In corn the life of nature is hid, and we enjoy the power of that life in bread. As with the body, so is it with the spirit. The body is fed by the visible, the changeable life: the spirit must be fed with the invisible, unchangeable life of heaven.

It was to bring to us this heavenly life that the Son of God descended to earth. It was to make this life accessible to us that He died like the seed corn in the earth, that His body was broken like the bread grain. It is to communicate this life to us and to make it our own, that He gives Himself to us in the Supper.

By His death Jesus took away the cause of our everlasting hunger and sorrow, namely, sin. The spirit of man, his undying part, can live only by God, "who only hath immortality." Sin separated man from God, and an eternal hunger and an eternal thirst of death were now his portion. He lost God, and nothing in the world can satisfy his infinite cravings. Then comes Jesus. He takes sin away and brings it to nought in His body, and gives us that body to eat and to do away with sin in us. Since in Him dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily, whenever I receive and enjoy Him, not only have I the forgiveness of sins, but the life of God, the life of heaven is implanted within me.

Wonderful grace: may I understand it aright. The man who uses the Lord's Supper aright is one that is distinguished from other men by the fact that he has partaken of the Bread of Life. He has really received Jesus Christ into his innermost being, and with Him the powers of the eternal life, as this is the life of heaven. It is to bring His own eternal life near to us, that God has given His Son as the food of the soul.

Glorious food: wonderful heavenly bread: what a heavenly life it imparts to us. Love to God, blessed rest, real holiness, inward power, all that characterizes the life that is enjoyed in heaven,–all that shall be in me the fruit of this Bread of Life.

Let me remember and believe the wonderful virtue of the food with which I am fed. Let me have strong expectations that this food shall work out its divine energy in me. Let me walk joyfully and full of courage, knowing that I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me. For He gives me strength. He dwells in me. He is my food.

Prayer.

O how wonderful is Thy grace, my precious Lord, that Thou Thyself hast become my food, which abides in me, gives me strength, and upholds and increases the life that is in me.

Lord, I have but one boon to crave of Thee this morning. It is this: that Thou wouldst increase my faith, that I may know aright what Thou art prepared to be to me. I feel that this is especially to be blamed as my weakness that I do not understand what Thou art willing to be and to do for me.

Precious Lord, make me to know this. Strengthen my faith to say continually: Jesus abides in me, Jesus is my food: fed with such nourishment, my life shall be powerful for the glorifying of God. Strengthen my faith to appropriate Thee continually for all my needs. Thou art the Provision in every necessity, the satisfaction of every desire. Strengthen my faith, Lord, to think no more of my weakness but of Thine own power: for Thou, O my Lord, Thou art always my food, my power of life. And strengthen my faith especially to receive this my heavenly food daily as its nourishment, to open my mouth wide every day, in order that it may be filled with Thee, with Thyself.

Lord Jesus, my food, which abides in me, Thou wilt surely do this for me. Amen.

TUESDAY MORNING

Sanctification

"Sin no more." –John 5:14, 8:11.

Thus Jesus spake to the sick man whom He had healed at the pool of Bethesda. Thus He spake also to the woman whom He liberated from the hand of her persecutors. Thus He speaks to every soul to which He has shown mercy, whose sickness He has healed, and whose life He has redeemed from destruction. Thus He speaks to everyone who goes forth from the blessed feast of the Supper: "Go hence: sin no more."

It was in order to save from sin that God sent His Son, that Jesus gave His life and His blood, that the Spirit came down from heaven. The Redeemer cannot suffer a, ransomed soul to go from the table of the covenant, without hearing anew this glorious word: "Henceforth- let there be no more sin." In the presence of the Cross and what thy sin cost Him, in view of His love and all the blessings which He has bestowed upon you, this word comes with divine power: "Go hence: sin no more."
.
"But, Lord, must I not always sin? In me dwelleth no good thing. I thought that the Christian continues to sin to the end."

"And have I not redeemed thee from the power of sin? Does not My Spirit dwell in you? Am not I Myself your sanctification?"

"But, Lord, can anyone, then, in this life be entirely holy?"

"The sinful nature you shall continue to have, but its workings can be overcome. You may become more holy every day. I am prepared to do for you above all that you dare ask or think."

"O my beloved Lord, I would so very fain be holy. Thou knowest how sin grieves me, how I pant after holiness. O, pray, teach me how I can be holy."

"Soul, I am thy sanctification. Abide in Me and thou shalt be holy. Entrust thyself to Me: I shall keep you holy. Believe in Me, that I shall fulfill My word. Let My word, My will, My mind, keep thy thoughts, thy heart occupied. Let Me dwell in thine heart–thy heart be full of Me: that will keep sin outside."

"O Lord, may it only be so in my case."

"Soul, fall down before Me, bring thyself to Me in sacrifice. Be not faithless, but believing. Look not upon thy weakness, or upon all that which is dead. Give Me the honor of being strong in faith, and confident that what I have promised, I am mighty and faithful to do, and it shall be to thee according to thy faith."

"Lord, I come. I fall down before Thee to dedicate myself now as a sacrifice to Thee."

Prayer.

(of a soul that surrenders itself to the Lord to be purified from every sin)

Blessed Lord, Thou art my sanctification. From Thee I have not only the command, but in Thee the power to go hence and to sin no more. Lord, now I give myself anew to Thee, and declare myself ready to be purified from every sin.

Of every known sin, of which I am already convinced, I do this very moment make renunciation. However deeply it may be rooted, however little I feel power to overcome it, in Thy name, my blessed Redeemer, I Hereby renounce it. I surrender myself to Thee to combat and overcome it in Thy strength. Lord, here am I, in order that Thou mayest cleanse me from all unrighteousness. Lord, this is my prayer: whatever it may cost me, through whatever pain or humiliation it may be achieved, take my sin from me. Lord, spare no single sin: make me holy.

And no less for the sin in me that is still unknown to myself,–sin which Thy people or the world or Thou Thyself mayest see in me,

but which my own self-love has not yet been willing to acknowledge, I place myself in Thy hands. Lord, make it known to me: use friend or foe to discover it, but, pray, let not my sin continue longer hid from me. I would fain know it, in order that I may bring it to Thee, and that Thou mayest cleanse me from it.

And strengthen my faith, precious Saviour, that I may very joyfully reckon on Thee to show Thyself to me as my sanctification. Thou art my Surety, who has not only atoned for the old guilt, but art also in a position to secure that every day and every moment the requirements of God's law may be fulfilled by me. Lord, cause me to believe this, and by a life of unceasing trust to experience how constantly Thou wilt keep and cleanse the soul. Then shall I go away from every observance of the Supper, to show anew that thou art my daily bread, and my daily strength: that Thy life is the life of my life and that Thou hearest my prayer:

.

"Jesus, come and live in me.
That I may ever, holy be.
Lord, here am I now, surrendered to Thee,
to be kept and sanctified in Thee.
On Thy word, I confidently cast myself. Amen."

WEDNESDAY MORNING

Obedience

> "Jesus said: My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." –John 4:34.

I have meat to eat that ye know not of." Jesus had a hidden manna that He received from the Father, and that was the secret of His wonderful power. The nutriment of His life He received from God in heaven. No one could have discovered what it was; but when He tells it to us, it appears so simple that many a one gets puzzled over it. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work."

Food is the meeting of need, satisfaction. The hunger of Jesus, the yearning of Jesus, extended only to one thing: to please God. Without that He could not rest; in that one thing, He had all He required. And when He found the will of God, He did it, and thereby at once fed His soul with its appropriate food, and was satisfied.

Food involves appropriation, the exercise of fellowship. The weak soul, who truly surrenders himself to do the will of God, becomes thereby wonderfully strengthened. Obedience to God, instead of exhausting the energies, only renews them. The doing of God's will was the food that Jesus had.

Food involves quickening and joy. Eating is not only necessary as medicine for strength, but is also in itself something that is acceptable, and imparts pleasure. To observe a feast in the spirit is itself equivalent to food. Obedience to the will of God was Jesus' highest joy.

As One who did the will of God, Jesus became our Saviour (Heb. 10:9, 10). He therefore that trusts in Him, receives Him as the fulfiller of the will of God, and with Him receives also the will of God as his life.

Now, then, Jesus has become my meat; and He Himself dwells in me as the power of my life. And now I know the means by which this life must be fed and strengthened within me. The doing of God's will is my meat. The doing of God's will was for Jesus the bread of heaven; and since I have now received Jesus Himself as my heavenly bread, He teaches me to eat what He Himself ate: He teaches me to do the will of God. That is the meat of my soul. I received the same Spirit that was in Him, and it became truth for me, as for Him. My meat, the highest satisfaction of my soul, fellowship with God, renewal of my energies, an unbroken feast of joy, is "to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." Thus the feast of the Supper is prolonged in the continued life of obedience to the will of God.

Prayer.

Eternal God, I thank Thee that in Thy Son Thou hast enabled us here on earth to contemplate the glorious life of heaven. I thank Thee for the sight of Him who, in the execution of Thy will found His meat, His life. Lord God, in the Supper Thou hast given me this Son in order that His life may become my life, and His Spirit my spirit. Lord, make me so thoroughly one with this Jesus, that I also, like Him, shall find my meat in the will of the Father.

Lord Jesus, it is a continued feast that Thou hast prepared for me. Every day I also may do the will of my Father. May this obedience be to me the continuation of the banquet of the Supper. Make my soul crave with an insatiable hunger to know the will of God in everything. Do Thou Thyself with Thy Divine power fulfill in me all obedience, and let my inner life thereby become all the stronger and more joyful.

Lord, I desire to confess before Thee how little I still have of true spiritual insight into the will of God. Lord, give me of Thy Spirit, in order that I may be transformed by the renewing of my mind, and so prove what is that good and perfect and acceptable will of God. Bring me to that blessed frame of mind in which, like Thee, my Lord, I shall refuse to do anything, unless I know that it is the will of the Father. Strengthen my faith, that by the Spirit Thou mayest make me to understand this will more fully, and in order that I may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

O, my Saviour, how shall my soul then be satisfied and praise Thee when all that I do is only obedience to the prayer: "Our Father,

Thy will be done, as in heaven so on earth."

Lord, give me always this food. Amen.

THURSDAY MORNING

Work

"If any will not work, neither let him eat." –2 Thessalonians 3:10.

That is true of the poor sluggard: he has nothing to eat. It is also true of the hireling: he cannot expect that his master will give him food to eat if he does not do his work. It is also true of the rich sluggard: although he has abundance, if he does not work he lacks the hunger that makes food acceptable.

And it is no less true, on the other hand, of spiritual food. The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink: there least of all may the bread of idleness be eaten. Israel had to eat the Passover, with loin girt, sandals on the feet, and staff in hand, ready to undertake the journey to Canaan in the strength of the food enjoyed.

Now, may not this fact discover to us the reason why, for many, the blessing imparted at the Supper is not greater than it is? They desire to partake of it in order to have an enjoyable festal hour, to be satisfied with blessed pleasures and glorious experiences. But they do not reflect that the Lord has prepared food for His children that they may be strengthened to go and work in His vineyard. They do not work for their Lord: they do not know what they ought to do: they do not consider the matter: and thus they have often to complain of darkness and loss of blessing at the Lord's Supper.

"If any will not work, neither let him eat": "If any will work, let him eat."

Alike in nature and in grace there is one law. He that desires to eat for the sake only of getting the food and for the satisfaction of his appetite, shall speedily lose the enjoyment of the food. He that eats to become strong and to work, shall find the food always accompanied with relish and imparting strength.

Christian, once again you have eaten: now is the time for work. Work the work of your Lord: live and work for the interests of His kingdom, and He will see to it that you have your food, and that the food will prove to you a source of relish and blessing. As it is in the service of an earthly parent, so is it in that of the Heavenly Father: the best preparation for the Lord's Supper is to have done faithfully the will of the Father, and to have finished His work. It was when Abraham returned from the campaign for the deliverance of Lot that Melchisedek, the priest of the Most High God, set before him bread and wine. "To him that overcometh," says Jesus–to him that works and strives and overcomes–"will I give to eat of the hidden manna."

Prayer.

Holy Lord my Redeemer and my Friend, it is my desire to work for Thee. I know that Thou hast given Thyself for us for this end, that Thou mightest have us for Thyself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. I know that there is no blessedness save in doing the will of the Father and finishing the work: He has given me. Lord, I come to Thee, in the joy and courage and power that the food which Thou Thyself hast prepared as the nutriment of my soul imparts, to ask of Thee my work.

I believe, Lord, that there is work for me, and that Thou wilt point out that work to me. Often have I desired to work for Thee according to my own feelings, and I have failed to win success. Lord Jesus, do Thou point out to me the work that I must do. Thou art my food and my strength. Thou art also my light and my leader. Let Thy Spirit so dwell in me that I shall be able to discern His voice, and, stimulated by Him, may carry out my work for souls.

Lord, I have eaten the bread of heaven: I will live to do the work of Heaven. Heavenly food brings heavenly strength, and heavenly strength brings heavenly work. Lord, make me to be Thy fellow-laborer, and teach me, like Thyself, to give my life to the work of the Kingdom of Heaven. Let my greatest joy be like that which prevails in heaven over the sinner that repenteth.

That work will cause me to feel the need of Thy divine power. That work will prepare me also to enjoy Thy food aright. That work will make every observance of the Supper more glorious for me, as a still deeper exercise of communion with Thee. So be it, O my Lord. Amen..

FRIDAY MORNING

Fellowship with Jesus

> "And lo, I am with you alway (all the days), even unto the end of the world." –Matthew 28:20.

For you": that was one of the words of Jesus at the table.

"With you": this is no less His promise, when you go away from the table. As real and complete and certain as His suretyship was, when He bore sin and gave His life for you, so real and certain is the fellowship which He holds out to you when He says, "I am with you all the days." If the "for you" was in every respect undivided and all sufficient, He means the "with you" to be in every respect just as undivided and inseparable.

And the one is, like the other, a word of faith: a word that unfolds itself only to faith. "For you" was in the first instance a truth that you found it impossible to receive. But the Spirit of God brought you up to the point of reception, and you were enabled to say, "Yes: Jesus for me–in my place: it is all finished for me." And this is now the sure and deep confidence of your soul. Even thus shall it be with this other word, "with you." Too often it appears as if it were not true, as if it could not possibly be true. At other times you could not live long if you felt yourself to be so sinful and miserable as you are. And yet it is true that Jesus is with you. Only you do not know it, you do not enjoy it, because you do not believe it. But as soon as you learn to rely, not upon your own feeling or on your own experience, but on what He has promised, and to direct your expectations according to faith in that which He hath said, namely, that He will be with you, it will become your blessedness. The "with you" is just as certain and complete as the "for you."

"I am with you." Jesus Himself abides with His own: the certainty of His presence and love, which will not abandon us. He, the Living, the Loving, the Almighty One: He Himself is with us, and in a position to make Himself known to us.

"With you all the days:" not only on the day of the Supper; not only on the festal days of life; but all the days, without one single exception. And thus, also, all the day. Whether I think of it or not, there He is the whole day–near me, with me. Not on my own faithfulness, but in that faithfulness of Thine which awakens my confidence and bestows on me Thine own nearness, I have the assurance of an unbroken fellowship with Thee, my beloved Lord.

Prayer.

Blessed Saviour, receive my thanks also for this word, "with you." And teach me, Lord, to make it my own in faith. For this end I will during these moments set myself in silence before Thee, and will wait upon Thee. Lord, speak Thyself to me these words "I am with you all the days."

Lord, what a source of joy and strength shall it prove to me when I know that as Thou art unchangeable, so also is Thy presence with me unchangeable. As little as Thou wilt for a single moment leave the right hand of the Father in heaven, wilt Thou leave Thy brother upon the earth: Thou abidest at my right hand. Thou hast said it, and therefore I know that it is true: "I will never leave you nor forsake you I am with you all the days." Precious Saviour, let Thy voice penetrate into the deepest recesses of my heart, and let my life this day, the whole day, and every day, be in Thy presence the presence of Him who says, "I am with you."

Alas, Lord, what have I not lost by not believing that word! And how have I grieved and dishonored Thee. Thou wast with me: Thy voice of love said without ceasing, "I am with you"; and yet through my proneness to unbelief, I heard it not. Often did I pray and beseech Thee that I might have Thee, and yet at the same time I practically despised Thee by not believing Thy word. O my Saviour, let it no longer be so. Strengthen my faith, and as Thou has taught me to rely upon the word of complete atonement, "For you," let the word of complete fellowship, "with you all the days," become my joy and my strength. Yea, cause me to understand that as the "for you" makes a complete provision for all the sins of the past, so the "with you" makes a provision equally complete for all the cares and sins of the future.

Yes, Lord, in Thy strength it shall be so. I will trust and not be afraid. Whatever or of whatever kind the days may be that await me, Thy word, "with you all the days," shall be sufficient for me. In Thy nearness, in fellowship with Thee, or rather in Thy fellowship with me, my life shall become a foretaste of the consummation when I shall say: "And lo, O Lord, I am with Thee for all eternity!"

Amen.

SATURDAY MORNING

The End

"The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me." "Being confident of this very thing, that He which began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ." Psalm 138:8; Philippians 1:6.

How many times has the believer gone from the Lord's Table with the sorrowful thought, Shall I indeed continue standing? Shall my resolutions and promises not be frustrated? Who tells me that I shall persevere unto the end? "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul" (1 Samuel 27:1).

It was just in such a crisis that David said, "I will cry unto God Most High, unto God that performeth all things for me" (Ps. 57:2). It is in God alone that the Christian has the assurance of his perseverance. To see from the beginning to the end, yea, to be Himself alike "the Beginning and the End," is one of the glorious attributes of the God who dwells in eternity. And it is one of the characteristics of His work, that, while man often begins without ending, with Him the end is as certain as the beginning. "What He has begun He will complete."

O my soul, if thou wouldst enjoy the comfort of this promise, be much occupied with this fact: "He has begun." The Christian speaks too often of his conversion and his faith and his self-surrender. Contemplating all this from the side of man, he keeps himself too little occupied with the thought: "HE has begun." My soul, understand what this means: He has sought me and found me and made me His own, and what He has thus done to me points back to that which He did for me: He gave His own Son, and by His blood He bought for Himself as His own possession. And that again points back to eternity. He chose me and loved me before the foundation of the world. My soul, ponder what this means: "He has begun."

Then shalt thou be able joyfully to exclaim, "He will perfect:" "the Lord will perfect that which concerneth me." Then shalt thy life become a life of humility and thanksgiving and confidence and joy and love. Thou seest that there is nothing in thyself, and thou learnest to expect all from God, and thank Him for all: thou learnest to rely upon Him in everything. And the end will be to you as certain as the beginning, because the end as well as the beginning has its root and stability in God. The self-same faith that, looking back, acknowledges the beginning as God's, also looks forward, and in the eternal and unchangeable God finds the end secured. "What He has begun He will perfect."

Prayer.

Lord God, Thou art without beginning and without end. For Thou art Thyself alike the beginning and the end. Thou art the Eternal, with whom there is no yesterday and no to-morrow. Thou art Thyself yesterday, to-day, and forever. With Thee there is no changeableness nor shadow of turning. Lord, in Thee alone Thy believing people find their comfort and their security. Nothing that we have done or still desire to do, nothing that we are or shall be, can give us rest. But, thanks be to Thy name, Thou Thyself, the Eternal, with Thine unchangeableness, Thou art our rest and our strength, In Thee alone and in Thy faithfulness does our life become freed from all fear.

Father, give me to understand this. Make me to know Thee as the God who has begun a good work in me. Let Thy Spirit seal it to me that Thou receivest me as the possession which Thou hast bought for Thyself, which is precious to Thee, and which no one shall pluck out of Thy hands. And then teach me, in the midst of all the sense of my own weakness and the power of sin which I have, always to trust and always to exclaim: "He that began a good work in me will perfect it."

Father, once again I thank Thee for the Supper that has been observed. Blessed Perfecter, perfect in me also Thy work of grace. Teach me to go forward on my way, full of joy, full of confidence and courage, full of thanksgiving and love. My God, become Thou everything to me: the God who has done everything, the God who will do everything, the God to whom all is due. and give me thereafter to await the glorious end, when I too shall be in perfection what I was at the beginning, and every day hope more and more to be, a monument of the grace of God on which he that runneth may read: "From Him and by Him and to Him are all things: to Him be glory for ever and ever." Amen.

APPENDIX

Throughout the preceding pages the author makes such pointed reference to the statements of the Directory of Public Worslnp in the Dutch Reformed Church that bear on preparation for the Lord's Supper, and also to the relevant questions of the Heidelberg Catechism, that it has been thought of advantage to the reader to have these passages before him.

I. Self-Examination

"True proving of ourselves consists of three parts:–

"1. In the first place, let everyone in his own heart reflect on his sin and condemnation, in order that he may loathe himself and humble himself before God: seeing that the wrath of God against sin is so great that, rather than suffer it to remain unpunished, He punished it in His dear Son Jesus Christ, in the bitter and ignominous death of the Cross.

"2. In the second place, let everyone examine his heart as to whether he also believes this sure promise of God, that only on the ground of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ all his sins are forgiven him, and the perfect righteousness of Christ is bestowed upon him and imputed to him as his own: yea, as completely as if he himself in his own person had atoned for all his sins and performed all righteousness.

"3. In the third place, let everyone examine his conscience as to whether he is prepared, henceforth and with his whole life, to manifest true thankfulness toward God the Lord, and to walk uprightly in God's sight.

"All who are so disposed, God will assuredly receive into His favor, and regard as worthy communicants at the table of His Son Jesus Christ. On the other hand, those that have no such testimony in their hearts, eat and drink judgment to themselves."
.

II. Christ in the Supper

"Question 76. What is meant by eating the crucified body and drinking the shed blood of Christ?

"Answer. It is not only to receive with a believing heart the whole suffering and dying of Christ, and thereby to obtain the forgiveness of sins and life eternal, but moreover, also, to be so united more and more to His sacred body by the Holy Ghost, who dwells both in Christ and in us, that although He is in Heaven and we are upon the earth, we are nevertheless flesh of His flesh and bone of His bones, and live and are governed forever by One Spirit, as the members of one body are by one soul.

"Question 79. Why, then, doth Christ call the bread His body and the cup His blood, or the New Testament in His blood; and St. Paul, the communion of the body and blood of Christ?

"Answer. Christ speaks thus not without great cause, namely, not only that He may thereby teach us that like as bread and wine sustain this temporal life, so also His crucified body and shed blood are the true meat and drink of our souls unto eternal life; but, much more that by this visible sign and pledge He may assure us that we are as really partakers of His true body and blood, through the working of the Holy Spirit, as with the bodily mouth we receive these holy tokens in remembrance of Him; and that all His suffering and obedience are as surely our own as if we ourselves in our own person had suffered all and done enough."

The School of Obedience

by Andrew Murray

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The School of Obedience

by

Rev. Andrew Murray

Author of "Absolute Surrender," "The Ministry of Intercession," "Abide in Christ," etc.

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To the Members
of
The Students' Christian Association
Of South Africa
and All Christian Students
Throughout the World
This Volume Is Prayerfully Dedicated

The School of Obedience

by Andrew Murray

PREFACE

These addresses on Obedience are issued with the very fervent prayer that it may please our gracious Father to use them for the instruction and strengthening of the young men and women, on whose obedience and devotion so much depends for the Church and the world. To all of them who read this I send my loving greeting. The God of all grace bless them abundantly!

It often happens after a Conference, or even after writing a book, that it is as if one only then begins to see the meaning and importance of the truth with which one has been occupied. So I do indeed feel as if I had utterly failed in grasping or expounding the spiritual character, the altogether indispensable necessity, the divine and actual possibility, the inconceivable blessedness of a life of true and entire obedience to our Father in heaven. Let me, therefore, just in a few sentences gather up the main points which have come home to myself with special power, and ask every reader at starting to take note of them as

SOME OF THE CHIEF LESSONS

to be learnt in Christ's school of obedience.

The Father in heaven asks, and requires, and actually expects, that every child of His yield Him whole-hearted and entire obedience, day by day, and all the day.

To enable His child to do this, He has made a most abundant and altogether sufficient provision in the promise of the New Covenant, and in the gift of His Son and Spirit.

This provision can alone, but can most certainly, be enjoyed, and these promises fulfilled, in the soul that gives itself up to a life in the abiding communion with the Three-One God, so that His presence and power work in it all the day.

The very entrance into this life demands the vow of absolute obedience, or the surrender of the whole being, to be, think, speak, do, every moment, nothing but what is according to the will of God, and well-pleasing to Him.

If these things be indeed true, it is not enough to assent to them: we need the Holy Spirit to give us such a vision of their glory and divine power, and the demand they make on our immediate and unconditional submission, that there may be no rest till we accept all that God is willing to do for us.

Let us all pray that God may, by the light of His Spirit, so show His loving and almighty will concerning us, that it may be impossible for us to be disobedient to the heavenly vision.

Andrew Murray.
Wellington, 9th August, 1898.

The School of Obedience

by Andrew Murray

I. Obedience: Its place In Holy Scripture.

In undertaking the study of a Bible word, or of a truth of the Christian life, it is a great help to take a survey of the place it takes in Scripture. As we see where, and how often, and in what connections it is found, its relative importance may be apprehended as well as its bearing on the whole of revelation. Let me try in this first chapter to prepare the way for the study of what obedience is, by showing you where to go in God's Word to find the mind of God concerning it.

1. TAKE SCRIPTURE AS A WHOLE.

We begin with Paradise. In Gen. 2:16, we read: 'And *the Lord God commanded the man*, saying.' And later (3:11), 'Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof *I commanded thee* that thou shouldest not eat?'

Note how obedience to the command is the one virtue of Paradise, the one condition of man's abiding there, the one thing his Creator asks of him. Nothing is said of faith, or humility, or love: obedience includes all. As supreme as is the claim and authority of God is the demand for obedience as the one thing that is to

DECIDE HIS DESTINY.

In the life of man, to obey is the one thing needful.

Turn now from the beginning to the close of the Bible. In its last chapter you read (Rev. 22:14), 'Blessed are they that *do His commandments,* that they may have a right to the tree of life.' Or, if we accept the Revised Version, which gives another reading, we have the same thought in chapters 12 and 14, where we read of the seed of the woman (12:17), 'which *keep the commandments of God,* and hold the testimony of Jesus'; and of the patience of the saints (14:12), 'Here are they that *keep the commandments of God,* and the faith of Jesus.'

From beginning to end, from Paradise lost to Paradise regained, the law is unchangeable—it is only obedience that gives access to the tree of life and the favor of God.

And if you ask how the change was effected out of the disobedience at the beginning that closed the way to the tree of life, to the obedience at the end that again gained entrance to it, turn to

THAT WHICH STANDS MIDWAY

between the beginning and the end—the cross of Christ. Read a passage like Rom. 5:19, *'Through the obedience of the One* shall the many be made righteous'; or Phil. 2:8, 'He *became obedient unto death, therefore* God hath highly exalted Him'; or Heb. 5:8, 9, 'He *learned obedience and became* the Author of salvation *to them that obey*

Him,' and you see how the whole redemption of Christ consists in restoring obedience to its place. The beauty of His salvation consists in this, that He brings us back to the life of obedience, through which alone the creature can give the Creator the glory due to Him, or receive the glory of which his Creator desires to make him partaker.

Paradise, Calvary, Heaven, all proclaim with one voice:

'Child of God! the first and the last thing thy God asks of thee is simple, universal, unchanging obedience.'

II. LET US TURN TO THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Here let us specially notice how, with any new beginning in the history of God's kingdom, obedience always comes into special prominence.

1. Take Noah, the new father of the human race, and you will find four times written (Gen. 6:22; 7:5, 9, 16),

'According to all *that God commanded Noah,* so did he.'

It is the man who does what God commands, to whom God can entrust His work, whom God can use to be a savior of men.

2. Think of Abraham, the father of the chosen race. 'By faith Abraham *obeyed*' (Heb. 11:7).

When he had been forty years in this school of faith-obedience, God came to perfect his faith, and to crown it with His fullest blessing. Nothing could fit him for this but a crowning act of obedience. When he had bound his son on the altar, God came and said (Gen. 22:12, 18),

'By Myself have I sworn, in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thee; and in thy seed shall all nations be blessed, *because thou hast obeyed My voice.'*

And to Isaac He spake (26:3, 5), 'I will perform the oath which I sware to Abraham, *because that Abraham obeyed my voice.'*

Oh, when shall we learn how unspeakably pleasing obedience is in God's sight, and how unspeakable is the reward He bestows upon it! The way to be a blessing to the world is to be men of obedience; known by God and the world by this

ONE MARK

- — a will utterly given up to God's will. Let all who profess to walk in Abraham's footsteps walk thus.

3. Go on to Moses. At Sinai, God gave him the message to the people (Ex. 19:4), *'If you will obey My voice indeed,* ye shall be a peculiar treasure to Me above all people.'

In the very nature of things it cannot be otherwise. God's holy will is His glory and perfection; it is only by an entrance into His will, by obedience, that it is possible to be His people.

4. Take the building of the sanctuary in which God was to dwell. In the last three chapters of Exodus you have the expression nineteen times, 'According to all the Lord commanded Moses, so did he,' And *then,* 'The glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.' Just so again in Lev. 8 and 9, you have, with reference to the consecration of the priests and the tabernacle, the same expression twelve times. And *then,* 'The glory of the Lord appeared before all the people, and fire came out from before the Lord, and consumed the burnt-offering.'

Words cannot make it plainer, that it is amid what the obedience of His people has wrought that God delights to dwell, that it is the obedient He crowns with His favor and presence.

5. After the forty years wandering in the wilderness, and its terrible revelation of the fruit of disobedience, there was again a new beginning when the people were about to enter Canaan. Read Deuteronomy, with all Moses spoke in sight of the land, and you will find there is no book of the Bible which uses the word 'obey' so frequently, or speaks so much of the blessing obedience will assuredly bring. The whole is summed up in the words (11:27),

'I set before you *a blessing if ye obey,* a curse in ye will not obey.'

Yes, 'a Blessing if ye Obey'! that is the key-note of the blessed life. Canaan, just like Paradise and Heaven, can be the place of blessing as it is the place of obedience. Would God we might take it in! Do beware only of praying only for a blessing. Let us care for the obedience, God will care for the blessing. Let my one thought as a Christian be, how I can obey and please my God perfectly.

6. The next new beginning we have is in the appointment of kings in Israel. In the story of Saul we have the most solemn warning as to the need of exact and entire obedience in a man whom God is to trust as ruler of His people. Samuel had commanded Saul (1 Sam. 10:8) to wait seven days for him to come and sacrifice, and to show him what to do. When Samuel delayed (13:8-14) Saul took it upon himself to sacrifice.

When Samuel came he said: 'Thou hast *not kept the commandment* of the Lord thy God, *which He commanded thee;* thy kingdom shall not continue, because thou hast not kept that which *the Lord commanded thee.'*

God will not honor the man who is not obedient.

Saul has a second opportunity given him of showing what is in his heart. He is sent to execute God's judgment against Amelek. He obeys. He gathers an army of two hundred thousand men, undertakes the journey into the wilderness, and destroys Amelek. But while God had commanded him 'utterly to destroy all; and not to spare,' he spared the best of the cattle and Agag.

God speaks to Samuel, 'It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be king, for *he hath not performed My commandment.'*

When Samuel comes, Saul twice over says, *'I have performed the commandment of the Lord;' 'I have obeyed the voice of the Lord.'*

And so he had, as many would think, But his obedience had not been entire. God claims exact, full obedience. God had said, *'Utterly destroy all! spare not!'* This he had not done. He had spared the best sheep for a sacrifice

unto the Lord. And Samuel said.

'*To obey* is better than any sacrifice. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord hath rejected thee.'

Sad type of so much obedience, which in part performs God's commandment, and yet is not the obedience God asks! God says of all sin and all disobedience: 'Utterly destroy all! spare not!' May God reveal to us whether we are indeed going all lengths with Him, seeking utterly to destroy all and spare nothing that is not in perfect harmony with His will. It is only a whole-hearted obedience, down to the minutest details, that can satisfy God. Let nothing less satisfy you; lest while we say, 'I have obeyed,' God says, 'Thou hast rejected the word of the Lord.'

7. Just one word more from the Old Testament. Next to Deuteronomy Jeremiah is the book most full of the word 'obey,' though alas! mostly in connection with the complaint that the people had not obeyed. God sums up all His dealings with he fathers in the one word,

'I spake not with them concerning sacrifices, but this thing I commanded them, Obey My voice and I will be your God.'

Would God that we could learn that all that God speaks of sacrifices, even of the sacrifice of His beloved Son, is subordinate to the one thing—to have His creature restored to full obedience. Into all the inconceivable meaning of the word, 'I will be your God,' there is no gateway but this, 'Obey My voice.'

III. WE COME TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. Here we think at once of our blessed Lord, and the prominence He gives to obedience as the one thing for which He was come into the world. He who entered it with His 'Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God,' ever confessed to men, 'I seek not My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.'

Of all He did and of all He suffered, even to the death, He said, 'This commandment have I received of My Father.'

If we turn to His teaching, we find everywhere, that the obedience He rendered is what He claims from everyone who would be His disciple.

During His whole ministry, from beginning to end, obedience is

THE VERY ESSENCE OF SALVATION.

In the Sermon on the Mount He began with it: No one could enter the kingdom, 'but he that *doeth the will* of My Father which is in heaven.' And in the farewell discourse, how wonderfully He reveals the spiritual character of true obedience as it is born of love and inspired by it, and as it also opens the way into the love of God. Do take into your heart the wonderful words, (John 14:15, 16, 21, 23), 'If ye love Me, ye will keep my commandments. And the Father will send forth the Spirit. He hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself unto him. If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him.'

No words could express more simply or more powerfully the inconceivably glorious place Christ gives to obedience, with its twofold possibility, (1) as only possible to a loving heart, (2) as making possible all that God has to give of His Holy Spirit, of His wonderful love, of His indwelling in Christ Jesus. I know of no passage in Scripture that gives a higher revelation of the spiritual life, or the power of loving obedience as its one condition. Let us pray God very earnestly that by His Holy Spirit its light may transfigure our daily obedience with its heavenly glory.

See how all this is confirmed in the next chapter. How well we know the parable of the vine! How often and how earnestly we have asked how to be able to abide continually in Christ We have thought of more study of the Word, more faith, more prayer, more communion with God, and we have overlooked the simple truth that Jesus teaches so clearly, '*If ye keep My commandments,* ye shall abide in My love,' with its divine sanction, '*Even as I kept* My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.'

For Him as for us, the only way under heaven to abide in divine love is to *keep the commandments.* Do let me ask, have you known it, have you heard it preached, have you believed it and proved it true in your experience: obedience on earth is the key to a place in God's love in heaven? Unless there be some correspondence between God's whole-hearted love in heaven, and our whole-hearted, loving obedience on earth, Christ cannot manifest Himself to us, God cannot abide in us, we cannot abide in His love.

2. If we go on from our Lord Jesus to His apostles, we find in the Acts two words of Peter's which show how our Lord's teaching had entered into him. In the one, 'God hath given His Holy Spirit *to them that obey Him,'* —he proves how he knew what had been the preparation for Pentecost, the surrender to Christ. In the other, '*We must obey God* rather than man' —we have the man-ward side: obedience is to be unto death; nothing on earth dare or can hinder it in the man who has given himself to God.

3. In Paul's Epistle to the Romans, we have, in the opening and closing verses the expression, *'the obedience of faith among all nations'* (1:5; 16:26), as that for which he was made an apostle. He speaks of what God had wrought 'to make the Gentiles obedient.' He teaches that, as the obedience of Christ makes us righteous, we become *the servants of obedience* unto righteousness. As disobedience in Adam and in us was the one thing that wrought death, so obedience, in Christ and in us, is the one thing that the gospel makes known as the way of restoration to God and His favor.

4. We all know how James warns us not to be hearers of the Word only but doers, and expounds how Abraham was justified, and his faith perfected, by his works.

5. In Peter's First Epistle we have only to look at the first chapter, to see the place obedience has in his system. In ver. 2 be speaks to the '*Elect, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and blood-sprinkling of Jesus Christ,*' and so points us to obedience as the eternal purpose of the Father, as the great object of the work of the Spirit, and a chief part of the salvation of Christ. In ver. 13 he writes, 'As *children of obedience,*' born of it, marked by it, subject to it, 'be ye holy in all manner of conversation.' Obedience is

THE VERY STARTING POINT OF TRUE HOLINESS.

In ver. 22 we read, 'Seeing ye have purified your souls *in your obedience* to the truth,' —the whole acceptance of the truth of God was not merely a matter of intellectual assent or strong emotion: it was a subjection of the life to the dominion of the truth of God: the Christian life was in the first place obedience.

6. Of John we know how strong his statements are. ‘He that saith, I know Him, and *keepeth not His Commandments,* is a liar.’ Obedience is

THE ONE CERTIFICATE OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

‘Let us love *in deed and truth;* hereby we shall assure our hearts before Him. And whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, *because we keep His commandments,* and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.’ Obedience is the secret of good conscience, and of the confidence that God heareth us. ‘This is the love of God, that we *keep His Commandments.’* The obedience that keeps His commandments: this is the garment in which the hidden, invisible love reveals itself, and whereby it is known.

Such is the place obedience has in Holy Scripture, in the mind of God, in the hearts of His servants. We may well ask, Does it take that place in my heart and life? Have we indeed given obedience that supreme place of authority over us that God means it to have, as the inspiration of every action, and of every approach to Him? If we yield ourselves to the searching of God’s Spirit, we may find that we never gave it its true proportion in our scheme of life, and that this lack is the cause of all our failure in prayer and in work. We may see that the deeper blessings of God’s grace, and the full enjoyment of God’s love and nearness, have been beyond our reach, simply because obedience was never made what God would have it be—the starting-point and the goal of our Christian life.

Let this, our first study, waken in us an earnest desire to know God’s will fully concerning this truth. Let us unite in praying that the Holy Spirit may show us how defective the Christian’s life is, where obedience does not rule all; how that life can be exchanged for one of full surrender to absolute obedience; and how sure it is that God in Christ will enable us to live it out.

The School of Obedience

by Andrew Murray

II. The Obedience of Christ.

'Through the obedience of the One shall all the many be made righteous.… Know ye not that ye are servants of obedience unto righteousness?' —Rom. 5:19; 6:16.

'Through the obedience of the One shall the many be made righteous.' These words tell us what we owe to Christ. As in Adam we were made sinners, in Christ we are made righteous.

The words tell us, too, to what in Christ it is we owe our righteousness. As Adam's disobedience made us sinners, the obedience of Christ makes us righteous. To the obedience of Christ we owe everything.

Among, the treasures of our inheritance in Christ this is one of the richest. How many have never studied it, so as to love it and delight in it, and get the full blessing of it! May God, by His Holy Spirit, reveal its glory, and make us partakers of its power.

You are familiar with the blessed truth of justification by faith. In the section of the Epistle to the Romans preceding our passage (3:21–5:11) Paul had taught what its ever-blessed foundation was—the atonement of the blood of Christ; what its way and condition—faith in the free grace of a God who justifies the ungodly; and what its blessed fruits—the bestowment of the righteousness of Christ, with an immediate access into the favor of God, and the hope of glory. In our passage he now proceeds to unfold the deeper truth of the union with Christ by faith, in which justification has its root, and which makes it possible and right for God to accept us for His sake. Paul goes back to Adam and our union with him, with all the consequences that flowed from that union, to prove how reasonable, how perfectly natural (in the higher sense of the word) it is that those who receive Christ by faith, and are so united with Him, become partakers of His righteousness and His life. It is in this argument that he specially emphasizes the contrast between the disobedience of Adam, with the condemnation and death it wrought, and the obedience of Christ, with the righteousness and life it brings. As we study the place the obedience of Christ takes in His work for our salvation, and see in it the very root of our redemption, we shall know what place to give it in our heart and life.

'Through the one man's disobedience many were made sinners.' How was this?

There was a twofold connection between Adam and his descendants—*the judicial* and *the vital.*

JUDICIAL AND VITAL CONNECTION.

Through the judicial, the whole race, though yet unborn, came at once under the sentence of death. 'Death reigned

from Adam to Moses, even over them' —such as little children— 'who had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression.'

This judicial relation was rooted in the vital connection. The sentence could not have come upon them, if they had not been in Adam. And the vital again became the manifestation of the judicial; each child of Adam enters life under the power of sin and death. 'Through the disobedience of the one, the many were constituted sinners,' both by position subject to the curse of sin and by nature subject to its power.

'Adam is the figure of Him who was to come,' and who is called the Second Adam, the Second Father of the race. Adam's disobedience in its effects is the exact similitude of what the obedience of Christ becomes to us. 'When a sinner believes in Christ, he is united to Him, and is at once, by a judicial sentence, pronounced and accepted as righteous in God's sight. The judicial relationship is rooted in the vital. He has Christ's righteousness only by having Christ Himself, and being in Him. Before he knows aught of what it is to be in Christ, he can know himself acquitted and accepted. But he is then led on to know the vital connection, and to understand that as real and complete as was his participation in Adam's disobedience with the death as well as the sinful nature that followed on it, is his participation in Christ's obedience, with both the righteousness and the obedient life and nature that come from it.

Let us see and understand this:

Through Adam's disobedience we are made sinners. The one thing God asked of Adam in Paradise was obedience. The one thing by which a creature can glorify God, or enjoy His favor and blessing, is obedience. The one cause of the power sin has got in the world, and the ruin it has wrought, is disobedience. The whole curse of sin on us is owing to disobedience imputed to us. The whole power of sin working in us, is nothing but this—that as we receive Adam's nature, we inherit his disobedience—we are born 'the children of disobedience.'

It is evident that

THE ONE WORK A CHRIST WAS NEEDED FOR

was to remove this disobedience—its curse, its dominion, its evil nature and workings. Disobedience was the root of all sin and misery. The first object of His salvation was to cut away the evil root, and restore man to his original destiny—a life in obedience to his God.

How did Christ do this?

First of all, by coming as the Second Adam, to undo what the first had done. Sin had made us believe that it was a humiliation always to be seeking to know and do God's will. Christ came to show us the nobility, the blessedness, the heavenliness of obedience. When God gave us the robe of creaturehood to wear, we knew not that its beauty, its unspotted purity, was obedience to God. Christ came and put on that robe that He might show us how to wear it, and how with it we could enter into the presence and glory of God. Christ came to overcome, and so bear away our disobedience, and to replace it by His own obedience on us and in us. As universal, as mighty, as all pervading as was the disobedience of Adam, yea, far more so, was to be the power of the obedience of Christ.

The object of Christ's life of obedience was threefold: (1) As an Example, to show us what true obedience was. (2) As our Surety, by His obedience to fulfill all righteousness for us. (3) As our Head, to prepare a new and

obedient nature to impart to us.

So He died, too, to show us that His obedience means a readiness to obey to the uttermost, to die for God; that it means the vicarious endurance and atonement of the guilt of our disobedience; that it means a death to sin as an entrance to the life of God for Him and for us.

The disobedience of Adam, in all its possible bearings, was to be put away and replaced by the obedience of Christ. Judicially, by that obedience we are made righteous. Just as we were made sinners by Adam's disobedience, we are at once and completely justified and delivered from the power of sin and death: we stand before God as righteous men. Vitally—for the judicial and the vital are as inseparable as in the case of Adam—we are made one plant with Christ in His death and resurrection, so that we are as truly dead to sin and alive to God, as He is. And the life we receive in Him is no other than a life of obedience.

Let every one of us who would know what obedience is, consider well: It is the obedience of Christ that is the secret of the righteousness and salvation I find in Him. The obedience is the very essence of that righteousness: obedience is salvation. His obedience, first of all to be accepted, and trusted to, and rejoiced in, as covering and swallowing, up and making an end of my disobedience, is the one unchanging, never-to-be-forsaken ground of my acceptance. And then, His obedience—just as Adam's disobedience was the power that ruled my life, the power of death in me—becomes the life-power of the new nature in me. Then I understand why Paul in this passage so closely links the righteousness and the life. 'If by the trespass of one, death reigned through the one, much more shall they who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness *reign in life through One,*' even here on earth. 'The gift came unto all men unto justification *of life.*'

The more carefully we trace the parallel between the first and Second Adam, and see how in the former the death and disobedience reigned in his seed equally with himself, and how both were equally transmitted, through union with him, the more will the conviction be forced upon us that the obedience of Christ is equally to be ours, not only by imputation, but by personal possession. It is so inseparable from Him that to receive Him and His life is to receive His obedience. When we receive the righteousness which God offers us so freely, it at once points us to the obedience out of which it was born, with which it is inseparably one, in which alone it can live and flourish.

See how this connection comes out in the next chapter. After having spoken of our life—union to Christ, Paul, for the first time in the epistle (6:12), gives an injunction, 'Let not sin reign;… present yourselves unto God'; and then immediately proceeds to teach how this means nothing but obedience: 'Know ye not, that ye are servants of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?' Your relation to obedience is a practical one; you have been delivered from disobedience (Adam's and your own), and now are become servants of obedience—and that 'unto righteousness.' Christ's obedience was unto righteousness—the righteousness which is God's gift to you. Your subjection to obedience is the one way in which your relation to God and to righteousness can be maintained. Christ's obedience unto righteousness is the only beginning of life for you; your obedience unto righteousness, its only continuance. There is but one law for the head and the members. As surely as it was with Adam and his seed, disobedience and death, it is with Christ and his seed, obedience and life. The one bond of union, the one mark of likeness, between Adam and his seed was disobedience. The one bond of union between Christ and His seed, the one mark of resemblance, is obedience.

It was obedience made Christ the object of the Father's love (John 10:17, 18) and our Redeemer; it is Obedience Alone can lead us in the way to dwell in that love (John 14:21, 23) and enjoy that redemption.

‘Through the obedience of the One shall the many be made righteous.’ Everything depends upon our knowledge of and participation in the obedience, as the gateway and path to the full enjoyment of the righteousness. At conversion the righteousness is given to faith, once for all, completely and forever, with but little or no knowledge of the obedience. But as the righteousness is indeed believed in and submitted to, and its full dominion over us, as ‘servants of righteousness,’ sought after, it will open to us its blessed nature, as born out of obedience, and therefore ever leading us back to its divine origin. The truer our hold of the righteousness of Christ, in the power of the Spirit, the more intense will be our desire to share in the obedience out of which it sprang. In this light let us

STUDY THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST,

that like Him we may live as servants of obedience unto righteousness.

1. In Christ this obedience was a life principle.

Obedience with Him did not mean a single act of obedience now and then, not even a series of acts, but the spirit of His whole life. ‘I came, not to do My own will.’ ‘Lo, I come, to do Thy will, O God.’ He had come into the world for one purpose. He only lived to carry out God’s will. The one supreme, all-controlling power of His life was obedience.

He is willing to make it so in us. This was what He promised when He said, ‘Whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother and sister and mother.’

The link in a family is a common life shared by all and a family likeness. The bond between Christ and us is that He and we together do the will of God.

2. In Christ this obedience was a joy. ‘I delight to do Thy will, O God.’ ‘My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me.’

Our food is refreshment and invigoration. The healthy man eats his bread with gladness. But food is more than enjoyment—it is the one necessary of life. And so, doing the will of God was the food that Christ hungered after and without which He could not live, the one thing that satisfied His hunger, the one thing that refreshed and strengthened Him and made Him glad.

It was something of this David meant when he spoke of God’s words being ‘sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.’ As this is understood and accepted, obedience will become more natural to us and necessary to us, and more refreshing than our daily food.

3. In Christ this obedience led to a waiting on God’s will.

God did not reveal all His will to Christ at once, but day by day, according to the circumstances of the hour. In His life of obedience there was growth and progress; the most difficult lesson came the last. Each act of obedience fitted Him for the new discovery of the Father’s further command. He spake, ‘Mine ears hast Thou opened; I delight to do Thy will, O God.’

It is as obedience becomes the passion of our life that the ears will be opened by God’s Spirit to wait for His teaching, and we be content with nothing less than a divine guidance into the divine will for us.

4. In Christ this obedience was unto death.

When He spake, ‘I came not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me,’ He was ready to go all lengths in denying His own will and doing the Father’s. He meant it. ‘In nothing My will; at all costs God’s will.’

This is the obedience to which He invites and for which He empowers us. This whole-hearted surrender to obedience in everything is the only true obedience, is the only power that will avail to carry us through. Would God that Christians could understand that nothing less than this is what brings the soul gladness and strength!

As long as there is a doubt about universal obedience, and with that a lurking sense of the possibility of failure, we lose the confidence that secures the victory. But when once we set God before us, as really asking full obedience, and engaging to work it, and see that we dare offer Him nothing less, we give up ourselves to the working of the divine power, which by the Holy Ghost can master our whole life.

5. In Christ this obedience sprang from the deepest humility. ‘Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who emptied Himself—who took the form of a servant—who humbled Himself, becoming obedient to death.’

It is the man who is willing for entire, self-emptying, is willing to be and live as the servant, ‘a servant of obedience,’ is willing to be humbled very low before God and man, to whom the obedience of Jesus will unfold its heavenly beauty and its constraining power. There may be a strong will, that secretly trusts in self, that strives for the obedience, and fails. It is as we sink low before God in humility, meekness, patience, and entire resignation to His will, and are willing to bow in an absolute helplessness and dependence on Him, as we turn away wholly from self, that it will be revealed to us how it is the one only duty and blessing of a creature to obey this glorious God!

6. In Christ this obedience was of faith—in entire dependence upon God’s strength. ‘I can do nothing of Myself.’ ‘The Father that dwelleth in Me doeth the works.’

The Son’s unreserved surrender to the Father’s will was met by the Father’s unceasing and undeserved bestowment of His power working in Him.

Even so it will be with us. If we learn that our giving up our will to God is ever the measure of His giving His power in us, we shall see that a surrender to full obedience is nothing but a full faith that God will work all in us.

God’s promises of the New Covenant all rest on this: ‘The Lord Thy God will circumcise thine heart to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and thou shall obey the Lord thy God.’ ‘I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments.’

Let us, like the Son, believe that God works all in us, and we shall have the courage to yield ourselves to an unreserved obedience—an obedience unto death. That yielding ourselves up to God will become the entrance into the blessed experience of conformity to the Son of God in His doing the Father’s will, because He counted on the Father’s power. Let us give our all to God. He will work His all in us.

Know ye not that ye, made righteous by the obedience of One, are like Him and in Him servants of obedience unto righteousness? It is in the obedience of the One the obedience of the many has its root, its life, its security. Let us turn and gaze upon, and study, and believe in Christ, as the obedient One, as never before. Let this be the Christ we receive and love, and seek to be made conformable to. As His righteousness is our one hope, let His obedience be our one desire. Let our faith in Him prove its sincerity and its confidence in God's supernatural power working in us by accepting Christ, the obedient One, as in very deed our life, as the Christ who dwells in us.

The School of Obedience

by Andrew Murray

III. The Secret of True Obedience.

'He learned obedience.'—Heb. 5:8.

The secret of true obedience—let me say at once what I believe it to be—is the clear and close personal relationship to God. All our attempts after full obedience will be failures until we get access to His abiding fellowship. *It is God's holy presence, consciously abiding with us, that keeps us from disobeying Him.*

Defective obedience is always the result of a defective life. To rouse and spur on that defective life by arguments and motives has its use, but their chief blessing must be that they make us feel the need of a different life, a life so entirely under the power of God that obedience will be its natural outcome. The defective life, the life of broken and irregular fellowship with God, must be healed, and make way for a full and healthy life; then full obedience will become possible. The secret of a true obedience is *the return to close and continual fellowship with God.*

'He learned obedience' (Heb. 5:8). And why was this needful? And what is the blessing He brings us? Listen, 'He learned obedience by the things which He suffered, and became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him.'

Suffering is unnatural to us, and therefore calls for the surrender of our will.

Christ needed suffering that in it He might learn to obey and give up His will to the Father at any cost. He needed to learn obedience that as our great High Priest He might be made perfect. He learned obedience, He became obedient unto death, that He might become the author of our salvation. He became the author of salvation *through obedience*, that He might save those *'who obey Him.'*

As obedience was with Him absolutely necessary to procure, it is with us absolutely necessary to inherit, salvation. The very essence of salvation is—obedience to God. Christ as the obedient One saves us as His obedient ones. Whether in His suffering on earth, or in His glory in heaven, whether in Himself or in us, obedience is what the heart of Christ is set upon.

On earth Christ was a learner in the school of obedience; in heaven He teaches it to His disciples here on earth. In a world where disobedience reigns unto death, the restoration of obedience is in Christ's hands. As in His own life, so in us, He has undertaken to maintain it. He teaches and works it in us.

Let us try and think what and how He teaches: it may be we shall see how little we have given ourselves to be pupils in this school, where alone obedience is to be learnt. When we think of an ordinary school, the principal

things we ask often are,— (1) the teacher, (2) the class-books, (3) the pupils. Let us see what each of these is in Christ's school of obedience.

I. THE TEACHER

'He learned obedience.' And now that He teaches it, He does so first and most by unfolding the secret of His own obedience to the Father.

I have said that the power of true obedience is to be found in the clear personal relationship to God. It was so with our Lord Jesus. Of all His teaching He said, 'I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father which sent Me gave Me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting; whatever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak.'

This does not mean that Christ received God's commandment in eternity as part of the Father's commission to Him on entering the world. No. Day by day, each moment as He taught and worked, He lived, as man, in continual communication with the Father, and received the Father's instructions just as He needed them. Does He not say, 'The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He *seeth* the Father do; for the Father *showeth* the Son all things that Himself *doeth;* and He *will show* Him greater things,' '*As I hear,* I judge,' 'I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me,' 'The words that I speak, I speak not of Myself, but the Father that dwelleth in Me'? It is everywhere a dependence upon a present fellowship and operation of God, a hearing and a seeing of what God speaks and does and shows.

Our Lord ever spoke of His relation to the Father as the type and the promise of our relation to Him, and to the Father through Him. With us as with Him, *the life of continual obedience is impossible without continual fellowship and continual teaching*. It is only when God comes into our lives, in a degree and a power which many never consider possible, when His presence as the Eternal and Ever-present One is believed and received, even as the Son believed and received it, that there can be any hope of a life in which every thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

The imperative need of the continual receiving our orders and instructions from God Himself is what is implied in the words:

'OBEY MY VOICE, AND I WILL BE YOUR GOD.'

The expression 'obeying the commandments' is very seldom used in Scripture; it is almost always obeying *Me*, or obeying or hearkening to *My voice.* With the commander of an army, the teacher of a school, the father of a family, it is not the code of laws, however clear and good, with its rewards or threats, that secures true obedience; it is

THE PERSONAL LIVING INFLUENCE,

wakening love and enthusiasm. It is the joy of ever hearing the Father's voice that will give the joy and the strength of true obedience. It is the voice gives power to obey the word; the word without the living voice does not avail.

How clearly this is illustrated by the contrast of what we see in Israel. The people had heard the voice of God on

Sinai, and were afraid. They asked Moses that God might no more speak to them. Let Moses receive the word of God and bring it to them. They only thought of the commands; they knew not that *the only power to obey* is in the presence of God and His voice speaking to us. And so with only Moses to speak to them, and the tables of stone, their whole history is one of disobedience, because they were afraid of direct contact with God.

It is even so still. Many, many Christians find it so much easier to take their teaching from godly men than to wait upon God to receive it from Himself. Their faith stands in the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God.

Do let us learn the great lesson our Lord, 'who learned obedience' by every moment waiting to see and hear the Father, has to teach us. *It is only when, like Him, with Him, in and through Him, we ever walk with God, and hear His voice*, that we can possibly attempt to offer God the obedience He asks and promises to work.

Out of the depths of His own life and experience, Christ can give and teach us this. Pray earnestly that God may show you the folly of attempting to obey without the same strength Christ needed, may make you willing to give up everything for the Christlike joy of the Father's presence all the day.

II. THE TEXT-BOOK.

Christ's direct communication with the Father did not render Him independent of Holy Scripture.

In the divine school of obedience there is but one text-book, whether for the Elder Brother or the younger children. In His learning obedience He used the same text-book as we have. Not only when He had to teach or to convince others did He appeal to the Word—He needed it and He used it for His own spiritual life and guidance.

From the commencement of His public life to its close He lived by the Word of God. *'It is written'* was the sword of the Spirit with which He conquered Satan. 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me': this word of Scripture was the consciousness with which He opened His preaching of the gospel. 'That the Scripture might be fulfilled' was the light in which He accepted all suffering, and even gave Himself to the death. After the resurrection He expounded to the disciples 'in all the Scriptures the things *concerning Himself.*'

In Scripture He had found God's plan and path for Him marked out. He gave Himself to fulfill it. It was in and with the use of God's Word that He received the Father's continual direct teaching.

In God's school of obedience the Bible is the only text-book. That shows us the disposition in which we are to come to the Bible—with the simple desire in it to find what is written concerning us as to God's will, and to do it.

Scripture was not written to increase our knowledge but to guide our conduct; 'that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished *unto all good works*.' 'If any man will *do*, he shall know.' Learn from Christ to consider all there is in Scripture of the revelation of God, and His love, and His counsel, as simply auxiliary to God's great end: that the man of God may be fitted to do His will, as it is done in heaven; that man may be restored to that perfect obedience on which God's heart is set, and which alone is blessedness.

In God's school of obedience God's Word is the only text-book. To apply that Word in His own life and conduct, to know when each different portion was to be taken up and carried out, Christ needed and received a divine teaching. It is He who speaks in Isaiah, 'The Lord God wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learned; the Lord God hath opened My ear.'

Even so does He who thus learned obedience teach it us, by giving us the Holy Spirit in our heart as the divine Interpreter of the Word. This is the great work of the indwelling Holy Spirit—to draw the Word we read and think upon *into our heart,* and make it quick and powerful there, so that God's living Word may work effectually in our will, our love, our whole being. It is because this is not understood that the Word has no power to work obedience.

Let me try and speak very plainly about this. We rejoice in increased attention given to Bible study, and in testimonies as to the interest awakened and benefit received. But let us not deceive ourselves. We may delight in studying the Bible; we may admire and be charmed with the views we get of God's truth; the thoughts suggested may make a deep impression and waken the most pleasing religious emotions; and yet the practical influence in making us holy or humble, loving, patient, ready either for service or suffering, be very small. The one reason for this is that we do not receive the Word, as it is in very deed, as the Word of a living God, who must Himself speak to us, and into us, if it is to exert its divine power.

The letter of the Word, however we study and delight in it, has no saving or sanctifying power. Human wisdom and human will, however strenuous their effort, cannot give, cannot command that power. The Holy Spirit is the mighty power of God: *it is only as the Holy Spirit teaches you,* only as the gospel is preached to you by man or by book, 'with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven,' that it will really give you, with every command, the strength to obey, and work in you the very thing commanded.

With man, knowing and willing, knowing and doing, even willing and performing, are, for lack of power, often separate, and even at variance. *Never in the Holy Spirit.* He is at once the light and the might of God. All He is and does and gives has in it equally the truth and the power of God. When He shows you God's command, He always shows it you as a possible and a certain thing, a divine life and gift prepared for you, which He who shows is able to impart.

Beloved Bible students! do learn to believe that it is only when Christ, through the Holy Spirit, teaches you to understand and take the Word into your heart, that He can really teach you to obey as He did. Do believe, every time you open your Bible, that just as sure as you listen to the divine, Spirit-breathed Word, so surely will our Father, in answer to the prayer of faith and docile waiting, give the Holy Spirit's living operation in your heart. Let all your Bible study be a thing of faith. Do not only try and believe the truths or promises you read. This may be in your own power. Before that, *believe in the Holy Spirit, in His being in you, in God's working in you through Him.* Take the Word into your heart, in the quiet faith that He will enable you to love it, and yield to it, and keep it; and our blessed Lord Jesus will make the book to you what it was to Him when He spoke of 'the things which are written concerning Me.' All Scripture will become the simple revelation of what God is going to do for you, and in you, and through you.

III. THE PUPIL.

We have seen how our Lord teaches us obedience by unfolding the secret of His learning it, in unceasing dependence on *the Father.* We have seen how He teaches us to use the Sacred Book as He used it, as a divine revelation of what God has ordained for us, with the *Holy Spirit* to expound and enforce. If we now consider the place the believer takes in the school of obedience as a pupil, we shall better understand what Christ the Son requires to do His work in us effectually.

In a faithful student there are several things that go to make up his feelings towards a trusted teacher. He submits

himself entirely to his leading. He reposes perfect trust in him. He gives him just as much time and attention as he asks.

When we see and consent that Jesus Christ has a right to all this, we may hope to experience how wonderfully He can teach us an obedience like His own.

1. *The true pupil,* say of some great musician or painter, *yields his master a whole-hearted and unhesitating submission.*

In practicing his scales or mixing the colors, in the slow and patient study of the elements of his art, he knows that it is wisdom simply and fully to obey.

It is this whole-hearted surrender to His guidance, this implicit submission to His authority, Christ asks. We come to Him asking Him to teach us the lost art of obeying God as He did. He asks us if we are ready to pay the price. It is entirely and utterly to deny self! It is to give up our will and our life to the death! It is to be ready to do whatever He saith!

The only way of learning to do a thing is to do it. The only way of learning obedience from Christ is to give up your will to Him, and to make the doing of His will the one desire and delight of your heart.

Unless you take the vow of absolute obedience as you enter this class of Christ's school, it will be impossible for you to make any progress.

2. The true scholar of a great master finds it easy to render him this implicit obedience, simply because *he trusts him.*

He gladly sacrifices his own wisdom and will to be guided by a higher.

We need this confidence in our Lord Jesus. He came from heaven to learn obedience, that He might be able to teach it well. His obedience is the treasury out of which, not only the debt of our past disobedience is paid, but out of which the grace for our present obedience is supplied. In His divine love and perfect human sympathy, in His divine power over our hearts and lives, He invites, He deserves, He wins our trust. It is by the power of a personal admiration and attachment to Himself, it is by the power of His divine love, in every deed shed into our heart by the Holy Spirit and wakening within us a responsive love, that He wakens our confidence, and communicates to us the true secret of success in His school. As absolutely as we have trusted Him as a Savior to atone for our disobedience, so let us trust him as a Teacher to lead us out of it. Christ is our Prophet or Teacher. A heart that enthusiastically believes in His power and success as a Teacher, will, in the joy of that faith, find it possible and easy to obey. It is the presence of Christ with us all the day that will be the secret of true obedience.

3. A scholar gives his master just as much of *his attendance and attention* as he asks. The master fixes how much time must be devoted to personal intercourse and instruction.

Obedience to God is such a heavenly art, our nature is so utterly strange to it, the path in which the Son Himself learned it was so slow and long, that we must not wonder if it does not come at once. Nor must we wonder if it needs more time at the Masterfeet in meditation, and prayer, and waiting, in dependence and self-sacrifice, than the most are ready to give. But let us give it.

In Christ Jesus heavenly obedience has become human again, obedience has become our birth-right and our life-breath: let us cling to Him, let us believe and claim His abiding presence. With Jesus Christ who learned obedience as our Savior, with Jesus Christ who teaches obedience as our Master, we can live lives of obedience. His obedience—we cannot study the lesson too earnestly—His obedience is our salvation; in Him, the living Christ, we find it and partake of it moment by moment.

Let us beseech God to show us how Christ and His obedience are actually to be our life every moment: that will then make us pupils who give Him all our heart and all our time. And He will teach us to keep His commandments and abide in His love, *even as He* kept His Father's commandments and abides in His love.

The School of Obedience

by Andrew Murray

IV. The Morning Watch in the Life of Obedience.

'If the first fruit is holy, so is the lump; and if the root is holy, so are the branches.' —Rom. 11:16.

How wonderful and blessed is the divine appointment of the first day of the week as a holy day of rest. Not, (as some think), that we might have at least one day of rest and spiritual refreshment amid the weariness of life, but that that one holy day, at the opening of the week, might sanctify the whole, might help and fit us to carry God's holy presence into all the week and its work. With the first-fruit holy, the whole lump is holy; with the root holy, all the branches are holy too.

How gracious, too, the provision suggested by so many types and examples of the Old Testament, by which a morning hour at the opening of the day can enable us to secure a blessing for all its work, and give us the assurance of

POWER FOR VICTORY

over every temptation. How unspeakably gracious, that in the morning hour the bond that unites us with God can be so firmly tied that during hours when we have to move amid the rush of men or duties, and can scarce think of God, the soul can be kept safe and pure; that the soul can so give itself away, in the time of secret worship, into His keeping, that temptation shall only help us to unite it closer with Him. What cause for praise and joy, that the morning watch can so each day renew and strengthen the surrender to Jesus and the faith in Him, that the life of obedience can not only be maintained in fresh vigor, but can indeed go on from strength to strength.

I would fain point out how intimate and vital the connection between obedience and the morning watch is. The desire for a life of entire obedience will give new meaning and value to the morning watch, even as this again can alone give the strength and courage needed for the former.

I. THE MOTIVE PRINCIPLE.

Think first of *the motive principle* that will make us love and faithfully keep the morning watch.

If we take it upon us simply as a duty, and a necessary part of our religious life, it will very soon become a burden. Or, if the chief thought be our own happiness and safety, that will not supply the power to make it truly attractive. There is only one thing will suffice—*the desire for fellowship with God.*

It is for that we were created in God's likeness. It is that in which we hope to spend eternity. It is that alone can fit

us for a true and blessed life, either here, or hereafter. To have more of God, to know Him better, to receive from Him the communication of His love and strength, to have our life filled with His,—it is for this He invites us to enter the inner chamber and shut the door.

It is in the closet, in the morning watch, that our spiritual life is both tested and strengthened. *There* is the battlefield where it is to be decided every day whether God is to have all, whether our life is to be absolute obedience. If we truly conquer there, getting rid of ourselves into the hands of our Almighty Lord, the victory during the day is sure. It is *there*, in the inner chamber, proof is to be given whether we really delight in God, and make it our aim to love Him with our whole heart.

Let this, then, be our first lesson: the presence of God is the chief thing, in our devotions. To meet God, to give ourselves into His holy will, to know that we are pleasing to Him, to have Him give us our orders, and lay His hand upon us, and bless us, and say to us, 'Go in this thy strength' —it is when the soul learns that this is what is to be found in the morning watch, day by day, that we shall learn to long for it and delight in it.

II. READING THE BIBLE.

Let us next speak of *the reading of God's Word,* as part of what occupies us there. With regard to this I have more than one thing I wish to say.

1. One is that *unless we beware, the Word, which is meant to point us away to God, may actually intervene and hide Him from us.*

The mind may be occupied and interested and delighted at what it finds, and yet, because this is more head knowledge than anything else, it may bring little good to us. If it does not lead us to wait on God, to glorify Him, to receive His grace and power for sweetening and sanctifying our lives, it becomes a hindrance instead of a help.

2. Another lesson that cannot be repeated too often, or pressed too urgently, is that *it is only by the teaching of the Holy Ghost that we can get at the real meaning of what God means by His Word, and that the Word will really reach into our inner life, and work in us.*

The Father in heaven, who gave us His Word from heaven, with its divine mysteries and message, has given us His Holy Spirit in us, to explain and internally appropriate that Word. The Father wants us each time to ask that He teach us by His Spirit. He wants us to bow in a meek, teachable frame of mind, and believe that the Spirit will, in the hidden depth of our heart, make His Word live and work. He wants us to remember that the Spirit is given us that we should be led by Him, should walk after Him, should have our whole life under His rule, and that therefore He cannot teach us in the morning unless we honestly give up ourselves to His leading. But if we do this and patiently wait on Him, not to get new thoughts but to get the power of the Word in our heart, we can count upon His teaching.

Let your closet be the classroom, let your morning watch be the study hour, in which your relation of entire dependence on, and submission to, the Holy Spirit's teaching is proved to God.

3. A third remark I want to make, in confirmation of what was said above, is this: *ever study in God's Word in the spirit of an unreserved surrender to obey*.

You know how often Christ, and His apostles in their Epistles, speak of hearing and not doing. If you accustom yourself to study the Bible without an earnest and very definite purpose to obey, you are getting hardened in disobedience.

Never read God's will concerning you without honestly giving up yourself to do it at once, and asking grace to do so. God has given us His Word, to tell us what He wants us to do and what grace He has provided to enable us to do it: how sad to think it a pious thing just to read that Word without any earnest effort to obey it! May God keep us from this terrible sin!

Let us make it a sacred habit to say to God, *'Lord, whatever I know to be Thy will, I will at once obey.'* Ever read with a heart yielded up in willing obedience.

4. One more remark. I have here spoken of such commands as we already know, and as are easily understood. But, remember, there are a great many commands to which your attention may never have been directed, or others of which the application is so wide and unceasing that you have not taken it in. Read God's Word with a deep desire to know all His will. If there are things which appear difficult, commands which look too high, or for which you need a divine guidance to tell you how to carry them out,—and there are many such,—let them drive you to seek a divine teaching. It is not the text that is easiest and most encouraging that brings most blessing, but the text, whether easy or difficult, which throws you most upon God. God would have you 'filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding'; it is in the closet this wonderful work is to be done. Do remember, it is only when you know that *God is telling you to do a thing* that you feel sure He gives the strength to do it. It is only as we are willing to know all God's will that, He will from time to time reveal more of it to us, and that we, will be able to do it all.

What a power the morning watch may be in the life of one who makes a determined resolve to meet God there; to renew the surrender to absolute obedience; humbly and patiently to wait on the Holy Spirit to be taught all God's will; and to receive the assurance that every promise given him in the Word will infallibly be made true! He that thus prays for himself, will become a true intercessor for others.

III. PRAYER.

It is in the light of these thoughts I want now to say a few words on *what prayer is to be* in the morning watch.

1. First of all, *see that you secure the presence of God.*

Do not be content with anything less than seeing the face of God, having the assurance that He is looking on you in love, and listening and working in you.

If our daily life is to be full of God, how much more the morning hour, where the life of the day alone can have God's seal stamped upon it. In our religion we want nothing so much as MORE OF GOD—His love, His will, His holiness, His Spirit living in us, His power working in us for men. Under heaven there is no way of getting this but by close personal communion. And there is no time so good for securing and practicing it, as the morning watch.

The superficiality and feebleness of our religion and religious work all come from having so little real contact with God. If it be true that God alone is the fountain of all love and good and happiness, and that to have as much as possible of His presence and His fellowship, of His will and His service, is our truest and highest happiness, surely then to meet Himself alone in the morning watch ought to be

OUR FIRST CARE.

To have had God appear to them, and speak to them, was with all the Old Testament saints the secret of their obedience and their strength. Do give God time in secret so to reveal Himself, that your soul may call the name of the place Peniel,—'for I have seen Him face to face.'

2. My next thought is: *let the renewal of your surrender to absolute obedience for that day be a chief part of your morning sacrifice.*

Let any confession of sin be very definite—a plucking out and cutting off of everything that has been grieving to God. Let any prayer for grace for a holy walk be as definite—an asking and accepting in faith of the very grace and strength you are specially in need of. Let your outlook on the day you are entering on be a very determined resolve that obedience to God shall be

ITS CONTROLLING PRINCIPLE.

Do understand that there is no surer way, rather, that there is no other possible way, of getting into God's love and blessing in prayer, than by getting into His will. In prayer, give up yourself most absolutely to the blessed will of God: this will avail more than much asking. Beseech God to show you this great mercy, that He allows you, that He will enable you, to enter into His will, and abide there—that will make the knowing and doing His will in your life a blessed certainty. Let your prayer indeed be a 'morning sacrifice,' a placing yourself as a whole burnt-offering on the altar of the Lord.

The measure of surrender to full obedience will be the measure of confidence toward God.

3. Then remember that *true prayer and fellowship with God cannot be all from one side.*

We need to be still, to wait and hear what response God gives. *This is the office of the Holy Spirit, to be the voice of God to us.* In the hidden depths of the heart, He can give a secret but most certain assurance that we are heard, that we are well-pleasing, that the Father engages to do for us what we have asked. What we need, to hear the Voice, to receive this assurance, is the quiet stillness that waits on God, the quiet faith that trusts in God, the quiet heart that bows in nothingness and humility before God, and allows Him to be all in all.

It is when God is waited on to take His part in our prayer that the confidence will come to us that we receive what we ask, that our surrender of ourselves in the sacrifice of obedience is accepted, and that therefore we can count upon the Holy Spirit to guide us into all the will of God, as He means us to know and do it.

What glory would come to us in the morning watch, and through it into our daily life, if it were thus made an hour spent with the Triune God, for the Father, through the Son and the Spirit, to take conscious possession of us for the day. How little need there then would be to urge and plead with God's children to watch the morning watch!

4. And now comes the last and the best of all. *Let your prayer be intercessional, on behalf of others.*

In the obedience of our Lord Jesus, as in all His fellowship with the Father, the essential element was—it was all for others. This Spirit flows though every member of the body; the more we know it, and yield to it, the more will our life be what God would make it. The highest form of prayer is intercession. The chief object for which God chose Abraham and Israel and us was to make us a blessing to the world. We are a royal priesthood—a priestly people. As long as prayer is only a means of personal improvement and happiness, we cannot know its full power. Let intercession be a real longing for the souls of those around us, a real bearing of the burden of their sin and need, a real pleading for the extension of God's kingdom, real labor in prayer for definite purposes to be realized—let such intercession be what the morning watch is consecrated to, and see what new interest and attraction it will have.

Intercession! Oh to realize what it means! To take the name, and the righteousness, and the worthiness of Christ, to put them on, and in them to appear before God! 'In Christ's stead,' now that He is no longer in the world, to beseech God, by name, for the individual men and needs, where His grace can do its work! In the faith of our own acceptance, and of the anointing with the Spirit to fit us for the work, to know that our prayer can avail to 'save a soul from death,' can bring down and dispense the blessing of heaven upon earth! To think that in the hour of the morning watch this work can be renewed and carried on day by day, each inner chamber maintaining its own separate communication with heaven, and helping together in bringing down its share of the blessing.

It is in intercession, more than in the zeal that works in its own strength with little prayer, that the highest type of piety, the true Christlikeness is cultivated. It is in intercession that a believer rises to his true nobility in the power of imparting life and blessing. It is to intercession we must look for any large increase of the power of God in the Church and its work for men.

One word in conclusion. Turn back and think now again about

THE INTIMATE AND VITAL CONNECTION

between obedience and the morning watch.

Without obedience there cannot be the spiritual power to enter into the knowledge of God's Word and will. Without obedience there cannot be the confidence, the boldness, the liberty that knows that it is heard. Obedience is fellowship with God in His will; without it there is not the capacity for seeing and claiming and holding the blessings He has for us.

And so, on the other side, without very definite living communion with God in the morning watch, the life of obedience cannot possibly be maintained. It is there that the vow of obedience can every morning be renewed in power and confirmed from above. It is there that the presence and fellowship can be secured which make obedience possible. It is there that in the obedience of the One, and in the union with Himself, the strength is received for all that God can ask. It is there that the spiritual understanding of God's will is received, which leads to walk worthy of the Lord to all well-pleasing.

God has called His children to live a wonderful, heavenly, altogether supernatural life. Let the morning watch

each day be to you as

THE OPEN GATE OF HEAVEN,

through which its light and power streams in on your waiting heart, and from which you go out to walk with God all the day.[1]

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1. [In a volume being published about the same time, *The Two Covenants and the Second Blessing*, I have tried to show how plain, how certain, how all sufficient the provision is that has been made in the New Covenant, the Covenant of Grace, forsecuring our obedience.]

The School of Obedience

by Andrew Murray

V. THE ENTRANCE TO THE LIFE OF FULL OBEDIENCE

'Obedient unto death.' —Phil. 2:8.

After all that has been said on the life of obedience, I purpose speaking in this address of the entrance on that life.

You might think it a mistake to take this text, in which you have obedience in its very highest perfection, as our subject in speaking of the entrance on the course. But it is no mistake. The secret of success in a race is to have the goal clearly defined, and aimed at from the very outset.

'He became obedient unto death.' There is no other Christ for any of us, no other obedience that pleases God, no other example for us to copy, no other Teacher from whom to learn to obey. Christians suffer inconceivably because they do not at once and heartily accept this as the only obedience they are to aim at. The youngest Christian will find it a strength in the school of Christ to make nothing less from the commencement his prayer and his vow: Obedient unto Death. It is at once the beauty and the glory of Christ. A share in it is the highest blessing He has to give. The desire for and the surrender to it is possible to the youngest believer.

If you want to be reminded of what it means, think of the story in ancient history. A proud king, with a great army following him, demands the submission of the king of a small but brave nation. When the ambassadors have delivered their message, he calls one of his soldiers to stab himself. At once he does it. A second is called; he too obeys at once. A third is summoned; he too is obedient to death.

'Go and tell your master that I have three thousand such men; let him come.'

The king dared count upon men who held their life not dear to them when the king's word called for it.

It is such obedience God wants. It is such obedience Christ gave. It is such obedience He teaches. Be it such obedience and nothing less we seek to learn. From the very outset of the Christian life let this be our aim, that we may avoid the fatal mistake of calling Christ Master and yet not doing what He says.

Let all who by these addresses have in any degree been convicted of the sin of disobedience, listen as we study from God's Word the way to escape from that and gain access to the life Christ can give—the entrance to the life of full obedience.

I. THE CONFESSION AND CLEANSING OF THE DISOBEDIENCE

It is easy to see that this must be the first step. In Jeremiah, the prophet who more than any other speaks of the disobedience of God's people, God says,

'Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; for I am merciful. *Only acknowledge thine iniquity that you have not obeyed My voice,* saith the Lord God. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord.'

As little as there can be pardon at conversion without confession can there be, after conversion, deliverance from the overcoming power of sin and the disobedience it brings, without a new and deeper conviction and confession.

The thought of our disobedience must not be a vague generality. The special things in which we actually

disobey must be definitely found out, and in confession given up and placed in the hands of Christ, and by Him cleansed away. Then only can there be the hope of entering into the way of true obedience.

Let us search our life by the light of the teaching of our Lord.

1. *Christ appealed to the law*.

He was not come to destroy the law, but to secure its fulfillment. To the young ruler, He said, ‘Thou knowest the commandments.’ Let the law be our first test.

Let us take a single sin—such as that of lying. I had a note from a young lady once saying that she wished to obey fully, and that she felt urged to confess an untruth she had told me. It was not a matter of importance, and yet she rightly judged that the confession would help her to cast it from her.

How much there is in ordinary society, how much in school life, too, that will not stand the test of strict truthfulness!

And so, there are other commandments, up to the very last, with its condemnation of all coveting and lusting after what is not ours, in which too frequently the Christian gives way to disobedience.

All this must come to a complete end. We must confess it, and in God’s strength put it away forever, if there is to be any thought of our entering a life of full obedience.

2. *Christ revealed the new law of love.*

To be merciful as the Father in heaven, to forgive just as He does, to love enemies and to do good to them that hate us, and to live lives of self-sacrifice and beneficence,—this was the religion Jesus taught on earth.

Let us look upon an unforgiving spirit when we are provoked or ill-used, upon unloving thoughts and sharp or unkind words, upon the neglect of the call to show mercy and do good and bless, all as so much disobedience, which must be felt and mourned over and plucked out like a right eye, ere the power of a full obedience can be ours.

3. *Christ spoke much of self-denial.*

Self is the root of all lack of love and obedience. Our Lord called His disciple to deny himself and to take up his cross; to forsake all, to hate and lose his own life, to humble himself and become the servant of all. He did so, because self, self-will, self-pleasing, self-seeking, is simply the source of all sin.

When we indulge the flesh in such a simple thing as eating and drinking; when we gratify self by seeking or accepting or rejoicing in what indulges our pride; when self-will is allowed to assert itself, and we make provision for the fulfillment of its desire, we are guilty of disobedience to His command. This gradually clouds the soul and makes the full enjoyment of His light and peace an impossibility,

4. *Christ claimed for God the love of the heart.*

For Himself He equally claimed the sacrifice of all to come and follow Him. The Christian who has not definitely at heart made this his aim, who has not determined to seek for grace so to live, is guilty of disobedience. There may be much in his religion that appears good and earnest, but he cannot possibly have the joyful consciousness of knowing that he is doing the will of his Lord, and keeping His commandments.

When the call is heard to come and now begin anew a true life of obedience, there are many who feel the desire to do so, and try quietly to slip into it. They think that by more prayer and Bible study they will grow into it—it will gradually come. They are greatly mistaken. The word God uses in Jeremiah might teach them their mistake:

‘Turn, ye backsliding children, turn to Me.’

A soul that is in full earnest and has taken the vow of full obedience may grow out of a feeble obedience into a fuller one. But there is no growing out of disobedience into obedience. A turning back, a turning

away, a decision, a crisis, is needed. And that only comes by the very definite insight into what has been wrong, and its confession with shame and penitence. Then alone will the soul seek for that divine and mighty cleansing from all its filthiness which prepares for the consciousness of the gift of the new heart, and God's Spirit in it causing us to walk in His statues.

If you would hope to lead a different life, to become a man or a woman of a Christlike obedience unto death, do begin by beseeching God for the Holy Spirit of conviction, to show you all your disobedience and to lead you in humble confession to the cleansing God has provided. Rest not till you have received it.

II. FAITH THAT OBEDIENCE IS POSSIBLE.

This is the second step. To take that step we must try and understand clearly what obedience is.

1. To this end we must attend carefully to the difference between *voluntary* and *involuntary* sin. It is with the former alone that obedience deals.

We know that the new heart which God gives His child is placed in the midst of the flesh with its sinfulness. Out of this there often arises, even in one who is walking in true obedience, evil suggestions of pride, unlovingness, impurity, over which he has no direct control. They are in their nature utterly sinful and vile; but they are not imputed to a man as acts of transgression. They are not acts of disobedience, which he can break off and cast out, as he can the disobedience of which we have spoken. The deliverance from them comes in another way, not through the will of the regenerate man, by which obedience always comes, but through the cleansing power of the blood and the indwelling Christ. As the sinful nature rises, all he can do is to abhor it and trust in the blood that at once cleanses him and keeps him clean.

IT IS OF GREAT CONSEQUENCE

to note the distinction. It keeps the Christian from thinking obedience impossible. It encourages him to seek and offer his obedience in the sphere where it can avail. And it is just in proportion as in its own sphere the power of the will for obedience is maintained, that the power of the Spirit can be trusted and obtained to do the cleansing work in what is beyond the reach of the will.

2. When this difficulty has been removed, there is often a second one arises, to make us doubt whether obedience be indeed possible.

Men connect it with the idea of absolute perfection. They put together all the commands of the Bible; they think of all the graces these commands point to, in their highest possible measure; and they think of a man with all those graces, every moment in their full perfection, as an obedient man. How different is the demand of the Father in heaven! He takes account of the different powers and attainments of each child of His. He asks of him only the obedience of each day, or rather, each hour at a time. He sees whether I have indeed chosen and given myself up to the whole-hearted performance of every known command. He sees whether I am really longing and learning to know and do all His will. And when His child does this, in simple faith and love, the obedience is acceptable. The Spirit gives us the sweet assurance that we are well-pleasing to Him, and enables us to 'have confidence before God, because we know that we keep His commandments, and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.'

This obedience is indeed an attainable degree of grace. The faith that it is, is indispensable to the obedient walk.

You ask for the ground of that faith in God's Word? You find it in God's New Covenant promise,

'I will write My law in their heart. I will put My fear in their heart, and they shall not depart from Me.'

The great defect of the Old Covenant was that it demanded, but did not provide, the power for obedience.

This the New Covenant did. The heart means the love, the life. The law put into, written into the heart, means that it has taken possession of the inmost life and love of the renewed man. The new heart delights in the law of God, it is willing and able to obey it.

You doubt this; your experience does not confirm it. No wonder! A promise of God is a thing of faith; you do not believe it, and so cannot experience it.

You know what invisible writing fluid is. You, write with it on paper, and nothing can be seen by a man who is not in the secret. Tell him of it, and by faith he knows it. Hold it up to the sun, or put some chemical on it, and out comes the secret writing. So God's law is written in your heart. If you believe this firmly, and come and say to God that His law is there in your inmost part, and hold up that heart to the light and heat of the Holy Spirit, you will find it true. The law written in the heart will mean to you the fervent love of God's commands, with the power to obey them.[1]

A story is told of one of Napoleon's soldiers. The doctor was seeking to extract a bullet that had lodged in the region of the heart, when the soldier cried,

'Cut deeper, you will find Napoleon graven there.'

Christian! do believe that the law lives in your inmost being! Speak in faith the words of David and of Christ,

'I delight to do Thy will O God! Yea, Thy law is written on my heart.'

The faith of this will assure you that obedience is possible. Such faith will help you into the life of true obedience.

III. THE STEP OUT OF DISOBEDIENCE TO OBEDIENCE IS BY SURRENDER TO CHRIST.

'Turn to Me, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backsliding,' God said to Israel.

They were His people, but had turned from Him; the return must be immediate and entire. To turn our back upon the divided life of disobedience, and in the faith of God's grace to say 'I will obey,' may be the work of a moment.

The power for it, to take the vow and to maintain it, comes from the living Christ, 'We have said before, the power of obedience lies in the mighty influence of a living personal Presence. As long as we took our knowledge of God's will from a book or from men, we could not but fail. If we take Jesus, in His unchanging nearness, as at once our Lord and our Strength, we can obey. The voice that commands is the voice that inspires. The eye that guides is the eye that encourages. Christ becomes all in all to us; the Master who commands the Example who teaches, the Helper who strengthens. Turn from your life of disobedience to Christ; give up yourself to Him in surrender and faith.

In surrender. Let Him have all. Give up your life to be as full of Him, of His presence, His will, His service, as He can make it. Give up yourself to Him, not to be saved from disobedience, that now you may be happy and live your own life without sinning and trouble. No; but that He may have you wholly for Himself, as a vessel, as a channel, which He can fill with Himself, with His life and love for men, and me in His blessed service.

In faith too. In a new faith. When a soul sees this new thing in Christ, the power for continual obedience, it needs a new faith to take in the special blessing of His great redemption. The faith that only understood 'He became obedient unto death' of His atonement, as a motive to love and obedience, now learns to take the word as Scripture speaks it, 'Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death.' It believes that Christ has put His own mind and Spirit into

us, and in the faith of that, prepares to live and act it out.
God sent Christ into the world to restore obedience to its place in our heart and life, to restore man to His place in the obedience to God. Christ came, and becoming obedient unto death proved what the only true obedience is. He wrought it out, and perfected it in Himself, as a life that He won through death, and now communicates to us. The Christ who loves us, who leads and teaches and strengthens us, who lives in us, is the Christ who was obedient unto death. 'Obedient unto death' is the very essence of the life He imparts. Shall we not accept it and trust Him to manifest it in us?

Would you enter into the blessed life of obedience? See here the open gate—Christ says, 'I am the door.' See here the new and living way—Christ says, 'I am the way.'
We begin to see it; all our disobedience was owing to our not knowing Christ aright. We see it; obedience is only possible in a life of unceasing fellowship with Himself. The inspiration of His voice, the light of His eyes, the grasp of His hand make it possible, make it certain.
Come and let us bow down, and yield ourselves to this Christ. Obedient unto death, in the faith that He makes us partakers with Himself of all He is and has.

[1] [In a volume being published about the same time, The Two Covenants and the Second Blessing, I have tried to show how plain, how certain, how all sufficient the provision is that has been made in the New Covenant, the Covenant of Grace, for securing our obedience.]

The School of Obedience

by Andrew Murray

VI. THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH

'By faith Abraham obeyed.' —Heb. 11:8.

'By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive as an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.' He believed that there was a land of Canaan, of which God had spoken. He believed in it as a 'land of promise,' secured to him as an inheritance. He believed that God would bring him there, would show it him, and give it him. In that faith he dared go out, not knowing whither he went. In the blessed ignorance of faith he trusted God, and obeyed, and received the inheritance.

The land of promise that has been set before us is *the blessed life of obedience*. We have heard God's call to go out and dwell there—about that there can be no mistake. We have heard the promise of Christ to bring us there, and to give us possession of the land—that, too, is clear and sure. We have surrendered ourselves to our Lord, and asked of our Father to make all this true in us. Our desire now is that all our life and work in it may be lifted up to the level of a holy and joyful obedience: and that through us God may make obedience the key-note of the Christian life we aim at promoting in others. Our aim is high: we can only reach it by a new inflow of the power that comes from above. It is only by a faith that gets a new vision and hold of the powers of the heavenly world, secured to us in Christ, that we can obey and obtain the promise.

As we think of all this, of cultivating in ourselves and others the conviction that we only live to please Him to serve His purposes, some are ready to say:

'This is not a land of promise we are called to enter, but a life of burden and difficulty and certain failure.'

Do not say so, my brother! God calls you indeed to a land of promise. Come and prove what He can work in you. Come and experience what the nobility is of a Christlike obedience unto death. Come and see what blessing God will give to him who, with Christ, gives himself the uttermost unto the ever-blessed and most holy will of God. Only believe in the glory of this good land of whole-hearted obedience: in God, in who calls you to it; in Christ, who will bring you in; in the Holy Spirit, who dwells and works all there. He that believeth entereth in.

I wish, then, to speak of the obedience of faith, and of faith as the sufficient power for all obedience. I give you these five simple words as expressive of the disposition of a believing heart entering on that life in the good land:—I see it, I desire it, I expect it, I accept it, I trust Christ for it.

I. FAITH SEES IT.

We have been trying to show you the map of the land, and to indicate the most important places in that land—the points at which God meets and blesses the soul. What we need now is in faith quietly and definitely to settle the question:

Is there really such a land of promise, in which continuous obedience is certainly, is divinely possible?

As long as there is any doubt on this point, it is out of the question to go up and possess the land.
Just think of Abraham's faith. It rested in God, in His omnipotence and His faithfulness. We have put before you the promises of God. Hear another of them: 'I will give you a new heart. and *I will put My Spirit within you,* and *I will cause* you to walk in my judgments, and *ye shall keep* them.' Here is God's covenant engagement. He adds, 'I the Lord have spoken, and *I will do it.*' He undertakes to cause and enable you to obey. In Christ and the Holy Spirit He has made the most wonderful provision for fulfilling His engagement.
Just do what Abraham did—fix your heart upon God. 'He was strong in faith, giving glory to God, being fully persuaded that what He had promised He was able to perform.' God's omnipotence was Abraham's stay. Let it be yours. Look out on all the promises God's Word gives of a clean heart, a heart established blameless in holiness, of a life in righteousness and holiness, of a walk in all the commandments of the Lord unblameable and well-pleasing to Him, of God's working in us to will and to do, of His working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight, in the simple faith: God says this; His power can do it. Let the assurance that a life of full obedience is possible, possess you. Faith can see the invisible and the impossible. Gaze on the vision until your heart says:
'It must be true. It is true. There is a life promised I have never yet known.'

II. FAITH DESIRES IT.

When I read the gospel story and see how ready the sick and the blind and the needy were to believe Christ's word, I often ask myself what it was that made them so much more ready to believe than we are. The answer I get in the Word is this, that one great difference lies in the honesty and intensity of the desire. They did indeed desire deliverance with their whole heart. There was no need of pleading with them to make them willing to take His blessing.
Alas, that it should be so different with us! All indeed wish, in a sort of way, to be better than they are. But how few there are who really 'hunger and thirst after righteousness'; how few who intensely long and cry after a life of close obedience, and the continual consciousness of being pleasing to God.
There can be no strong faith without strong desire. Desire is the great motive-power in the universe. It was God's desire to save us moved HIM to send His Son. It is desire that moves one to study and work and suffer. It is alone the desire for salvation that brings a sinner to Christ. It is the desire for God, and the closest possible fellowship with Him, the desire to be just what He would have us be, and to have as much of His will as possible, that will make the promised land attractive to us. It is this will make us forsake everything to get our full share in the obedience of Christ.
And how can the desire be awakened?
Shame on us, that we need to ask the question; that the most desirable of all things, likeness to God in the union with His will and doing it, has so little attraction for us! Let us take it as a sign of our blindness and dullness, and beseech God to give us by His Spirit 'enlightened eyes of the heart,' that we may see and know 'the riches of the glory of our inheritance' waiting upon the life of true obedience. Let us turn and gaze, in this light of God's Spirit, and gaze again on the life as possible, as certain, as divinely secured and divinely blessed, until our faith begins to burn with desire, and to say:
'I do long to have it. With my whole heart will I seek it.'

III. FAITH EXPECTS IT.

The difference between desire and expectation is great. There is often a strong desire after salvation in a

soul who has little hope of really obtaining it. It is a great step in advance when desire passes into expectation, and the soul begins to savor spiritual blessing:
‘I am sure it is for me, and, though I do not see how, I confidently expect to obtain it.’
The life of obedience is no longer an unattainable ideal held out by God, to make us strive at least to get a little nearer it, but is become a reality, meant for the life in flesh and blood here on earth. Expect it, as most certainly meant for you. Expect God to make it true.
There is much indeed to hinder this expectation. Your past failure; your unfavorable temperament or circumstances; your feeble faith; your difficulty as to what such a devotion, obedient unto death, may demand; your conscious lack of power for it; —all this makes you say:
‘It may be for others; it is not for me, I fear.’
I beseech you, speak not thus. You are leaving God out of account. Expect to get it. Look up to His power and His love, and do begin to say,
‘It is for me.’
Take courage from the lives of God’s saints who have gone before you. Santa Teresa writes that after her conversion she spent more than eighteen years of her life in that miserable attempt to reconcile God and her life of sin. But at last she was able to write,
‘I have made a vow never to offend God in the very least matter. I have vowed that I would rather die a thousand deaths than do anything of that kind, knowing I was doing it—this was obedience unto death. I am resolved never to leave anything whatever undone that I consider still to be more perfect, and more for the honor of my Lord.’[1]
Gerhard Tersteegen had from his youth sought and served the Lord. After a time the sense of God’s grace was withdrawn from him, and for five long years he was as one far away on the great sea, where neither sun nor stars appear. ‘But my hope was in Jesus.’All at once a light broke on him that never went out, and he wrote, with blood drawn from his veins, that letter to the Lord Jesus in which he said:
‘From this evening to all eternity, Thy will, not mine be done. Command and rule and reign in me. I yield up myself without reserve, and I promise, with Thy help and power, rather to give up the last drop of my blood than knowingly or willingly be untrue or disobedient to Thee.’
That was his obedience unto death.
Set your heart upon it, and expect it. The same God lives still. Set your hope on Him; He will do it.

IV. FAITH ACCEPTS IT.

To accept is more than to expect. Many wait and hope and never possess because they do not accept.
To all who have not accepted, and feel as if they were not ready to accept, we say, Expect. If the expectation be from the heart, and be set indeed upon God Himself, it will lead the soul to accept.
To all who say they do expect, we urgently say, Accept. Faith has the wondrous God-given power of saying,
‘I accept, I take, I have.’
It is for the lack of this definite faith, that claims and appropriates the spiritual blessing we desire, that so many prayers appear to be fruitless. For such an act of faith all are not ready. Where there is no true conviction of the sin of disobedience, and alas! no true sorrow for it; where there is no strong longing or purpose really in everything to obey God; where there is no deep interest in the message of Holy Scripture, that God wants to ‘perfect us to do His will,’ by Himself ‘working in us that which is pleasing in His sight,’ there is not the spiritual capacity to accept the blessing. The Christian is content to be a

babe. He wants only to suck the milk of consolation. He is not able to bear the strong meat of which Jesus ate, ‘doing, the will of His Father.’

And yet we come to all with the entreaty, Accept it, the grace for this wondrous new life of obedience; accept it now. Without this your act of consecration will come to little. Without this your purpose to try and be more obedient must fail. Has not God shown you that there is an entirely new position for you to take—a possible position of simple childlike obedience, day by day, to every command His voice speaks to you through the Spirit: a possible position of simple childlike dependence on and experience of His all-sufficient grace, day by day, for every command He gives?

I pray you, even now, take that position, make that surrender, take that grace. Accept and enter on the true life of faith, and the unceasing obedience of faith. As unlimited and as sure as God’s promise and power are, may your faith be. As unlimited as your faith is, will your simple childlike obedience be. Oh! ask God for His aid, and accept all He has offered you.

V. FAITH TRUSTS CHRIST FOR ALL.

‘All the promises of God are in Christ Jesus, and in Him, Amen, unto the glory of God by us.’ It is possible that as we have spoken of the life of obedience, there have been questions and difficulties rising to which you cannot at once give answer. You may feel as if you cannot take it all in at once, or reconcile it with all the old habits of thought and speech and action. You fear you will not be able at once to bring all into subjection to this supreme all-controlling principle,

‘Do everything as the will of God: do all as obedience to Him.’

To all these questions there is one answer; one deliverance from all these fears; Jesus Christ, the living Savior, knows all, and asks you to trust yourself to Him for the wisdom and the power to walk ever in the obedience of faith.

We have seen more than once how His whole redemption, as He effected it, is nothing but obedience. As He communicates it, it is still the same. He gives us the spirit of obedience as the spirit of our life. This spirit comes to us each moment through Him. He Himself keeps charge of our obedience. There is none under heaven but what He has and gives and works. He offers Himself to us as surety for its maintenance, and asks us to trust Him for it. It is in Jesus Himself all our fears are removed, all our needs supplied, all our desires met. As He the righteous One is your righteousness, He the obedient One is your obedience. Will you not trust Him for it? What faith sees and desires and expects and accepts, surely it dare trust Christ to give and to work.

Will you not to-day take the opportunity of giving glory to God and His Son, by trusting Jesus now to lead you into the promised land: Look up to your glorified Lord in heaven, and in His strength renew, with new meaning, your vow of allegiance, your vow never to do anything knowingly or willingly that would offend Him. Trust Him for the faith to make the vow, for the heart to keep it, for the strength to carry it out. Trust Him , the loving One, by His living presence, to secure both your faith and obedience. Trust Him, and venture to join in an act of consecration, in the assurance that He undertakes to be its Yea and Amen, to the glory of God by us.

[1][She says further: ‘We are so long and so slow in giving up our hearts to Thee. And then Thou wilt not permit our possession of Thee without our paying well for so precious a possession. There is nothing in all the world wherewith to buy the shedding abroad of Thy love in our hearts, but our heart’s love. God never withholds Himself from them who pay this price and persevere in seeking Him. He will, little by little, and now and then, strengthen and restore that soul, until it is at last victorious.’]

The School of Obedience

by Andrew Murray

VII. The School of Obedience

A Basket of Fragments

'Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.' —John 6:12.

In this closing chapter I wish to gather up some points not yet touched upon, or not expressed with sufficient clearness, in the hope that they may help some one who has indeed enrolled himself in Christ's school of obedience.

I. ON LEARNING OBEDIENCE.

First, let me warn against a misunderstanding of the expression— 'learning obedience.'
We are apt to think that absolute obedience as a principle—obedience unto death—is a thing that can only be gradually learned in Christ's school. This is a great and most hurtful mistake. What we have to learn, and do learn gradually, is the practice of obedience, in new and more difficult commands. But as to the principle, Christ wants us from the very entrance into His school to make the vow of entire obedience.
A little child of five can be implicitly obedient as a youth of eighteen. The difference between the two lies not in the principle, but in the nature of the work demanded. .
Though externally Christ's obedience unto death came at the end of His life, the spirit of His obedience was the same from the beginning. Whole-hearted obedience is not the end, but the beginning of our school life. The end is fitness for God's service, when obedience has placed us fully at God's disposal. A heart yielded to God in unreserved obedience is the one condition of progress in Christ's school, and of growth in the spiritual knowledge of God's will.
Young Christian! do get this matter settled at once. Remember God's rule: all for all. Give Him all: He will give you all. Consecration avails nothing unless it means presenting yourself as a living sacrifice to do nothing but the will of God. The vow of entire obedience is the entrance fee for him who would be enrolled by no assistant teacher, but by Christ Himself, in the school of obedience.

II. OF LEARNING TO KNOW GOD'S WILL.

This unreserved surrender to obey, as it is the first condition of entering Christ's school, is the only fitness for receiving instruction as to the will of God for us.
There is a general will of God for all His children, which we can, in some measure, learn out of the Bible. But there is a special individual application of these commands—God's will concerning each of us personally, which only the Holy Spirit can teach. And He will not teach it, except to those who have taken the vow of obedience.
This is the reason why there are so many unanswered prayers for God to make known His will. Jesus said, 'If any man wills to do His Will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God.' If a man's will is

really set on doing God’s will, that is, if his heart is given up to do, and he as a consequence does it as far as he knows it, he shall know what God has further to teach him.

It is simply what is true of every scholar with the art he studies, of every apprentice with his trade, of every man in business doing is the one condition of truly knowing. And so obedience, the doing of God’s will as far as we know, and the will and the vow to do it all as He reveals it, is the spiritual organ, the capacity for receiving the true knowledge of what is God’s will for each of us.

In connection with this let me press upon you three things.

1. *Seek to have a deep sense of your very great ignorance of God’s will, and of your impotence by any effort to know it aright.*

The consciousness of ignorance lies at the root of true teachableness. ‘The meek will He guide in the way’—those who humbly confess their need of teaching. Head-knowledge only gives human thoughts without power. God by His Spirit gives a living knowledge that enters the love of the heart, and works effectually.

2. *Cultivate a strong faith that God will make you know wisdom in the hidden part, in the heart.*

You may have known so little of this in your Christian life hitherto that the thought appears strange. Learn that God’s working, the place where He gives His life and light, is in the heart, deeper than all our thoughts. Any uncertainty about God’s will makes a joyful obedience impossible. Believe most confidently that the Father is willing to make known what He wants you to do. Count upon Him for this. Expect it certainly.

3. In view of the darkness and deceitfulness of the flesh and fleshly mind, *ask God very earnestly for the searching and convincing light of the Holy Spirit.*

There may be many things which you have been accustomed to think lawful or allowable, which your Father wants different. To consider it settled that they are the will of God because others and you think so, may effectually shut you out from knowing God’s will in other things. Bring everything, without reserve, to the judgment of the Word, explained and applied by the Holy Spirit. Wait on God to lead you to know that everything you are and do is pleasing in His sight.

III. ON OBEDIENCE UNTO DEATH.

There is one of the deeper and more spiritual aspects of this truth to which I have not alluded. It is something that as a rule does not come up in the early stages of the Christian life, and yet it is needful that every believer know what the privileges are that await him. There is an experience into which whole-hearted obedience will bring the believer, in which he will know that, as surely as with his Lord, obedience leads to death.

Let us see what this means. During our Lord’s life, His resistance to sin and the world was perfect and complete. And yet His final deliverance from their temptations and His victory over their power, His obedience, was not complete until He had died to the earthly life and to sin. In that death He gave up His life in perfect helplessness into the Father’s hands, waiting for Him to raise Him up. It was through death that He received the fullness of His life and glory. Through death alone, the giving up of the life He had, could obedience lead Him into the glory of God.

The believer shares with Christ in this death to sin. In regeneration he is baptized by the Holy Spirit into it. Owing to ignorance and unbelief he may know little experimentally of this entire death to sin. When the Holy Spirit reveals to him what he possesses in Christ, and he appropriates it in faith, the Spirit works in him the very same disposition which animated Christ in His death. With Christ it was an entire ceasing from His own life, a helpless committal of His spirit into the Father’s hands. This was the complete

fulfillment of the Father's command: Lay down Thy life in My hands. Out of the perfect self-oblivion of the grave He entered the glory of the Father.

It is into the fellowship of this a believer is brought. He finds that in the most unreserved obedience for which God's Spirit fits him, there is still a secret element of self and self-will. He longs to be delivered from it. He is taught in God's Word that this can only be by death. The Spirit helps him to claim more fully that he is indeed dead to sin in Christ, and that the power of that death can work mightily in him. He is made willing to be obedient unto death, this entire death to self, which makes him truly nothing. In this he finds a full entrance into the life of Christ.

To see the need of this entire death to self, to be made willing for it, to be led into the entire self-emptying and humility of our Lord Jesus,—this is the highest lesson that our obedience has to learn —this is, indeed, the Christlike obedience unto death.

There is no room here to enlarge on this. I thought it well to say this much on a lesson which God Himself will, in due time, teach those who are entirely faithful.

IV. OF THE VOICE OF CONSCIENCE.

In regard to the knowledge of God's will, we must see and give conscience its place, and submit to its authority.

There are a thousand little things in which the law of nature or education teaches us what is right and good, and in regard to which even earnest Christians do not hold themselves bound to obey. Now, remember, if you are unfaithful in that which is least, who will entrust you with the greater? Not God. If the voice of conscience tells you of some course of action that is the nobler or the better, and you choose another because it is easier or pleasing to self, you unfit yourself for the teaching of the Spirit, by disobeying the voice of God in nature. A strong will always to do the right, to do the very best, as conscience points it out, is a will to do God's will. Paul writes, 'I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.' The Holy Ghost speaks through conscience: if you disobey and hurt conscience, you make it impossible for God to speak to you.

Obedience to God's will shows itself in tender regard for the voice of conscience. This holds good with regard to eating and drinking, sleeping and resting, spending money and seeking pleasure,—let everything be brought into subjection to the will of God.

This leads to another thing of great importance in this connection. If you would live the life of true obedience, see that you maintain a good conscience before God, and never knowingly indulge in anything which is contrary to His mind. George Muller attributed all his happiness during seventy years to this, along with his love of God's Word. He had maintained a good conscience in all things, not going on in a course he knew to be contrary to the will of God. Conscience is the guardian or monitor God has given you, to give warning when anything goes wrong. Up to the light you have, give heed to conscience. Ask God, by the teaching of His will, to give it more light. Seek the witness of conscience that you are acting up to that light. Conscience will become your encouragement and your helper, and give you the confidence, both that your obedience is accepted, and that your prayer for ever-increasing, knowledge of the will is heard.

V. OF LEGAL AND EVANGELICAL OBEDIENCE.

Even when the vow of unreserved obedience has been taken, there may still be two sorts of obedience—that of the law, and that of the gospel. Just as there are two Testaments, an Old and a New, so there are

two styles of religion, two ways of serving God. This is what Paul speaks of in Romans, when he says, 'Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are *not under law* but under grace' (6:14), and further speaks of our being 'freed from the law,' so 'that we serve in newness of the spirit and *not in the oldness of the letter*' (7:6); and then again reminds us, 'Ye received *not again the spirit of bondage* unto fear, but ye received the Spirit of adoption' (8:15).

The threefold contrast points very evidently to a danger existing among those Christians of still acting as if they were under the law, serving in the boldness of the letter and in the spirit of bondage. One great cause of the feebleness of so much Christian living is because it is more under law than under grace. Let us see what the difference is.

What the law demands from us, grace promises and performs for us.

The law deals with what we ought to do, whether we can or not, and by the appeal to motives of fear and love stirs us to do our utmost. But it gives no real strength, and so only leads to failure and condemnation. Grace points to what we cannot do, and offers to do it for us and in us.

The law comes with commands on stone or in a book. Grace comes in a living, gracious Person, who gives His presence and His power.

The law promises life, if we obey. Grace gives life, even the Holy Spirit with the assurance that we can obey.

Human nature is ever prone to slip back out of grace into the law, and secretly to trust to trying and doing its utmost. The promises of grace are so divine, the gift of the Holy Spirit *to do all in us* is so wonderful, that few believe it. This is the reason they never dare take the vow of obedience, or, having taken it, turn back again. I beseech you, study well what gospel obedience is. The gospel is good tidings. Its obedience is part of that good tidings—*that grace, by the Holy Spirit, will do all in you*. Believe that, and let every undertaking to obey be in the joyous hopefulness that comes from faith in the exceeding abundance of grace, in the mighty indwelling of the Holy Spirit, in the blessed love of Jesus whose abiding presence makes obedience possible and certain.

VI. OF THE OBEDIENCE OF LOVE.

This is one of the special and most beautiful aspects of gospel obedience. The grace which promises to work all through the Holy Spirit is the gift of eternal love. The Lord Jesus (who takes charge of our obedience, teaches it, and by His presence secures it to us) is He who loved us unto the death, who loves us with a love that passeth knowledge. Nothing can receive or know love but a loving heart. And it is this loving heart that enables us to obey. Obedience is the loving response to the divine love resting on us, and the only access to a fuller enjoyment of that love.

How our Lord insisted upon that in His farewell discourse! Thrice He repeats it in John 14—'*If ye love Me*, ye will keep My commandments.' 'He that keepeth My commandments, he it is that *loveth Me*.' 'If a man *love Me*, he will keep My word.' Is it not clear that love alone can give the obedience Jesus asks, and receive the blessing Jesus gives to obedience? The gift of the Spirit, the Father's love and His own, with the manifestation of Himself; the Father's love and His own making their abode with us: into these, loving obedience gives the assured access.

In the next chapter He puts it from the other side, and shows how obedience leads to the enjoyment of God's love—He kept His Father's commandments, and *abides in His love*. If we keep His commandments, we shall *abide in His love*. He proved His love by giving His life for us; *we are His friends*, we shall enjoy His love, if we do what He commands us. Between His first love and our love in

response to it, between our love and His fuller love in response to ours, *obedience is the one indispensable link*. True and full obedience is impossible, except as we live and love. 'This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.'

Do beware of a legal obedience, striving after a life of true obedience under a sense of duty. Ask God to show you the 'newness of life' which is needed for a new and full obedience. Claim the promise, 'I will circumcise thine heart, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart; and thou shalt obey the Lord thy God.' Believe in the love of God and the grace of our Lord Jesus. Believe in the Spirit given in you, enabling you to love, and so causing you to walk in God's statutes. In the strength of this faith, in the assurance of sufficient grace, made perfect in weakness, enter into God's love, and the life of living obedience it works. For it is nothing but the continual presence of Jesus in His love can fit you for continual obedience.

VII. IS OBEDIENCE POSSIBLE?

I close with once again, and most urgently, pressing home this question. It lies at the very root of our life. The secret, half-unconscious thought that to live always well-pleasing to God is beyond our reach, eats away the very root of our strength. I beseech you to give a definite answer to the question.

If in the light of God's provision for obedience, of His promise of working all His good pleasure in you, of His giving you a new heart, with the indwelling of His Son and Spirit, you still fear obedience is not possible, do ask God to open your eyes truly to know His will.[1] If your judgment be convinced, and you assent to the truth theoretically, and yet fear to give up yourself to such a life, I say to you too, Do ask God to open your eyes and bring you to know *His will for yourself*. Do beware lest the secret fear of having to give up too much, of having to become too peculiar and entirely devoted to God, keep you back. Beware of seeking just religion enough to give ease to the conscience, and then not desiring to do and be and give God all He is worthy of. And beware, above all, of 'limiting' God, of making Him a liar, by refusing to believe what He has said He can and will do.

If our study in the school of obedience is to be of any profit, rest not till you have written it down—Daily obedience to all that God wills of me is possible, is possible to me. In His strength I yield myself to Him for it.

But, remember, only on one condition. Not in the strength of your resolve or effort, but *that the unceasing presence of Christ, and the unceasing teaching of the Spirit of all grace and power be your portion.* Christ, the obedient One, living in you, will secure your obedience. Obedience will be to you a life of love and joy in His fellowship.

[1][I once again refer to a new book, The Two Covenants and the Second Blessing, for further exposition of the sufficiency of the grace of the New Covenant to fit us for entire obedience.]

The School of Obedience

by Andrew Murray

VIII. OBEDIENCE TO THE LAST COMMAND

'Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations.' —Matt. 28:19.

'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.'—Mark 16:15.

As Thou didst send Me into the world, even so send I them into the world' — John 17:18; 20:21.

'Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be My witnesses unto the uttermost parts of the earth.'—Acts 1:8.

All these words breathe nothing less than the spirit of world conquest. 'All the nations,' 'all the world,' 'every creature,' 'the uttermost parts of the earth,'—each expression indicates that the heart of Christ was set on claiming His rightful dominion over the world He had redeemed and won for Himself. He counts on His disciples to undertake and carry out the work. As He stands at the foot of the throne, ready to ascend and reign, He tells them, 'All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth,' and points them at once to 'all the world,' to 'the uttermost parts of the earth,' as the object of His and their desire and efforts. As the King on the throne, He Himself will be their helper: 'I am with you alway.' They are to be the advance guard of His conquering hosts even to the end of the world. He Himself will carry on the war. He seeks to inspire them with His own assurance of victory, with His own purpose to make this the only thing to be thought of as worth living or dying for—the winning back of the world to its God.

Christ does not teach or argue, ask or plead: He simply commands. He has trained His disciples to obedience. He has attached them to Himself in a love that can obey. He has already breathed His own resurrection Spirit into them. He can count upon them. He dare say to them: 'Go ye into all the world.' Formerly, during His life on earth, they had more than once expressed their doubt about the possibility of fulfilling His commands. But here, as quietly and simply as He speaks these divine words, they accept them. And no sooner has He ascended than they go to the appointed place, to wait for the equipment of a heavenly power from their Lord in heaven, for the heavenly work of making all the nations His disciples. They accepted the command and passed it on to those who through them believed on His name. And within a generation, simple men, whose names we do not even know, had preached the gospel in Antioch and Rome and the regions beyond. The command was passed on, and taken up into the heart and life, as meant for all ages, as

MEANT FOR EVERY DISCIPLE.

The command is for us, too, for each one of us. There is in the Church of Christ no privileged clan to which alone belongs the honor, nor any servile clan on which alone rests the duty, of carrying the gospel to every creature. The life Christ imparts is His own life, the spirit He breathes is His very own Spirit, the one disposition He works is His own self-sacrificing love. It lies in the very nature of His salvation that every member of His body, in full and healthy access with Him feels himself urged to impart what he has received. The command is no arbitrary law from without. It is simply the revelation, for our intelligent and voluntary consent, of the wonderful truth that we are His body, that we now occupy His place on earth, and that His will and love now carry out through us the work He began, and that now in His stead we live to seek the Father's glory, in

WINNING A LOST WORLD BACK TO HIM.

How terribly the Church has failed in obeying the command! How many Christians there are who never knew that there is such a command! How many who hear of it, but do not in earnest set themselves to obey it! And how many who seek to obey it in such way and measure as seems to them fitting and convenient.

We have been studying what obedience is. We have professed to give ourselves up to a whole-hearted obedience. Surely we are prepared gladly to listen to anything that can help us to understand and carry out this our Lord's last and great command: *the gospel to every creature.*

Let me give you what I have to say under the three simple headings: *Accept His command. Place yourself entirely at His disposal. Begin at once to live for His kingdom.*

I. ACCEPT HIS COMMAND.

There are various things that weaken the force of this command. There is the impression that a command given to all and general in its nature is not as binding as one that is entirely personal and specific; that if others do not their part, our share of the blame is comparatively small; that where the difficulties are very great, obedience cannot be an absolute demand; that if we are willing to do our best, this is all that can be asked of us.

Brethren! this is not obedience. This is not the spirit in which the first disciples accepted it. This is not the spirit in which we wish to live with our beloved Lord. We want to say, each one of us—If there be no one else, I, by His grace, will give myself and my life to live for His kingdom. Let me for a moment separate myself from all others, and think of my personal relation to Jesus.

I am a member of Christ's body. He expects every member to be at His disposal, to be animated by His Spirit, to live for what He is and does. It is so with my body. I carry every healthy member with me day by day, in the assurance that I can count upon it to do its part. Our Lord has taken me so truly up into His body that He can ask and expect nothing else from me. And I have so truly yielded myself to Him that there can be no idea of my wanting anything but just to know and do His will.

Or let me take the illustration of 'the Vine and the branches.' The branch has just as much only one object for its being as the vine—bearing fruit. If I really am a branch, I am just as much as He was in the world—only and wholly to bring forth fruit, to live and labor for the salvation of men.

Take still another illustration. Christ has bought me with His blood. No slave conquered by force or purchased by money was ever so entirely the property of his master, as my soul, redeemed and won by Christ's blood, given up and bound to Him by love, is His property, for Him alone to do with it what He pleases. He claims by divine right, working through the Holy Spirit in an infinite power, and I have given

a full assent, that I live wholly for His kingdom and service. This is my joy and my glory.
There was a time when it was different. There are two ways in which a man can bestow his money or service on another. In olden time there was once a slave, who by his trade earned much money. All the money came to the master. The master was kind and treated the slave well. At length the slave, from earnings his master had allowed him, was able to purchase his liberty. In course of time the master became impoverished, and had to come to his former slave for help. He was not only able, but most willing to give it, and gave liberally, in gratitude for former kindness.
You see at once the difference between the bringing of his money and service when be was a slave, and his gifts when he was free. In the former case he gave all, because it and he belonged to the master. In the latter he only gave what he chose.
In which way ought we to give to Christ Jesus? I fear many, many give as if they were free to give what they chose, what they think they can afford. The believer to whom the right which the purchase price of the blood has acquired, has been revealed by the Holy Spirit, delights to know that he is the bond slave of redeeming love, and to lay everything he has at his Master's feet, because he belongs to Him.
Have you ever wondered that the disciples accepted the great command so easily and so heartily? They came fresh from Calvary, where they had seen the blood. They had met the risen One, and He had breathed His Spirit into them. During the forty days, 'through the Holy Ghost He had given His commandments unto them.' Jesus was to them Savior, Master, Friend, and Lord. His word was with divine power; they could not but obey. Oh, let us bow at His feet, and yield to the Holy Spirit to reveal and assert His mighty claim, and let us unhesitatingly and with the whole heart accept the command as our one life-purpose: the gospel to every creature.

II. PLACE YOURSELF AT HIS DISPOSAL.

The last great command has been so prominently urged in connection with Foreign Missions that many are inclined exclusively to confine it to them. This is a great mistake. Our Lord's words, 'Make disciples of all nations; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you,' tell us what our aim is to be—nothing less than to make every man a true disciple, living in holy obedience to all Christ's will.
What a work there is to be done in our Christian churches and our so-called Christian communities ere it can be said that the command has been carried out! And what a need that the whole Church, with every believer in it, realize that to do this work is the sole object of its existence! The gospel brought fully, perseveringly, savingly to every creature: this is the mission, this ought to be the passion, of every redeemed soul. For this alone is the Spirit and likeness and life of Christ formed in you.
If there is one thing that the Church needs to preach, in the power of the Holy Ghost, it is the absolute and immediate duty of every child of God, not only to take some part in this work, as he may think fit or possible, but to give himself to Christ the Master, to be guided and used as He would have. And therefore I say to every reader who has taken the vow of full obedience—and dare we count ourselves true Christians if we have not done so?—place yourself at once and wholly at Christ's disposal. As binding, as is the first great command on all God's people, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart,' is this the last great command too— 'The gospel to every creature.' Ere you know what your work may be, ere you feel any special desire or call or fitness for any work,—if you are willing to accept the command, place yourself at His disposal. It is His as Master to train and fit and guide and use you. Fear not; come at once and forever out of the selfish religion which puts your own will and comfort first, and gives Christ

what you see fit. Let the Master know that He can have you wholly. Enroll yourself at once with Him as

A VOLUNTEER FOR HIS SERVICE.

God has in these few past years filled our hearts with joy and thanksgiving at what He has done through the Student Volunteer Movement. The blessing it is bringing the Christian Church is as great as that coming to the heathen world. I sometimes feel as if there were only one thing still needed to perfect its work. Is there not a need of an enrollment of Volunteers for Home Service, helping its members to feel that as intense and undivided as is the consecration to which the Volunteer for foreign work is stirred and helped is the devotion Christ asks of every one, whom He has bought with His blood, for His service in saving the world? What blessings have not these simple words, ‘It is my purpose, if God permit, to become a foreign missionary,’ brought into thousands of lives! It helped them into the surrender of obedience to the great command, and became an era in their history. What blessings might not come to many who can never go abroad, or who think so, because they have not asked their Master’s will, if they could take the simple resolve *By the grace of God I devote my life wholly to the service of Christ’s kingdom!* The external forsaking of home and going abroad is often a great help to the foreign volunteer, through the struggle it costs him, and the breaking away from all that could hinder him. The home volunteer may have to abide in his calling, and not have the need of such an external separation—he needs all the more the help which a pledge, given in secret, or in union with others, can bring. The blessed Spirit can make it a crisis and a consecration that leads to a life utterly devoted to God.
Students in the school of obedience study the last and great commandment well. Accept it with your whole heart. Place yourselves entirely at His disposal.

III. AND BEGIN AT ONCE TO ACT ON YOUR OBEDIENCE.

In whatever circumstances you are, it is your privilege to have within reach souls that can be won for God. All around you there are numberless forms of Christian activity which invite your help and offer you theirs. Look upon yourself as redeemed by Christ for His service, as blessed with His Spirit to give you the very dispositions that were in Himself, and take up, humbly but boldly, your life calling, to take part in the great work of winning back the world to God. Whether you are led of God to join some of the many agencies already at work, or to walk in a more solitary path, remember not to regard the work as that of your church, or society, or as your own but as the Lord’s. Cherish carefully the consciousness of ‘doing it unto the Lord,’ of being a servant who is under orders, and simply carrying them out; your work will then not, as so often, come between you and the fellowship with Christ, but link you inseparably to Him, His strength, and His approval.
It is so easy to get so engrossed in the human interest there is in our work, that its spiritual character, the supernatural power needed for it, the direct working of God in us and through us, all that can fill us with true heavenly joy and hope is lost out of sight. Keep your eye on your Master, on your King, on His throne. Ere He gave the command, and pointed His servants to the great field of the world. He first drew their eyes to Himself on the throne: *‘All power is given Me in heaven and on earth.’* It is the vision, the faith, of Christ on the throne that reminds of the need, that assures us of the sufficiency of His divine power. Obey, not a command, but the living Almighty Lord of Glory; faith in Him will give you heavenly strength.
These words preceded the command, and then there followed, *‘Lo, I am with you alway.’* It is not only Christ on the throne—glorious vision!—that we need, but Christ with us here below, in His abiding

presence, Himself working for us and through us. Christ's power in heaven, Christ's presence on earth—between these two pillar promises lies the gate through which the Church enters to the conquest of the world. Let each of us follow our Leader, receive from Himself our orders as to our share in the work, and never falter in the vow of obedience that has given itself to live wholly for His will and His work alone. Such a beginning will be a training time, preparing us fully to know and follow His leading. If His call for the millions of dying heathen come to us, we shall be ready to go. If His providence does not permit our going, our devotion at home will be as complete and intense as if we had gone. Whether it be at home or abroad, if only the ranks of the obedient, the servants of obedience, the obedient unto earth, are filled up, Christ shall have His heart's desire, and His glorious thought—the gospel to every creature—find its accomplishment!

Blessed Son of God! Here I am. By Thy grace, I give my life to the carrying out of Thy last great command. Let my heart be as Thy heart. Let my weakness be as Thy strength. In Thy name I take the vow of entire and everlasting obedience. Amen.

The School of Obedience

by Andrew Murray

NOTE ON THE MORNING WATCH.

'By, the observance of the morning watch is commonly meant the spending of *at least* the first half-hour of every day alone with God, in personal devotional Bible study and prayer.

'There are Christians who say that they do not have time to devote a full half-hour to such a spiritual exercise. It is a striking fact that the busiest Christians constitute the class who plead this excuse the least, and most generally observe the morning watch. Any Christian who will honestly and persistently follow this plan for a month or two will become convinced that it is the best possible use of his time, that it does not interfere with his regular work, and that it promotes the wisest economy of time.…

'In India, in China, in Japan, hundreds of students have agreed to keep the morning watch.…

'The practical question for each of us is, Why should not I keep the morning watch? Next to receiving Christ as Savior, and claiming the baptism of the Holy Ghost, *we know of no act attended with larger good to ourselves and to others* than the formation of an undiscourageable resolution to keep the morning watch.'

These quotations are from an address by John R. Mott. At first sight the closing statement appears too strong. But think a moment, what such a revelation implies.

It means the deep conviction that the only way to maintain and carry out the surrender to Christ and the Holy Spirit, is by meeting God very definitely at the commencement of each day, and receiving from Himself the grace needed for a walk in holy obedience.

It means an insight into the folly of attempting to live a heavenly life without rising up into close communion with God in heaven, and receiving from Himself the fresh bestowal of spiritual blessings.

It means the confession that it is alone in personal fellowship with God, and in delight in His nearness, that proof can be given that our love responds to His, and that we count His nearness our chief joy.

It means the faith that if time enough be given for God to lay His hands on us, and renew the inflowings of His Spirit, our soul may be so closely united to Him that no trials or duties can separate us from Him.

It means a purpose to live wholly and only for God, and by the sacrifice of time and ease to prove that we are willing to pay any price to secure the first of all blessings the presence of God for all the day.

Let us now look again at that sentence—, 'Next to receiving Christ as our Savior, and claiming the baptism of the Holy Spirit, *we know of no act attended with larger good to ourselves or to others* than the formation of an undiscourageable resolution to keep the morning watch.' If our acceptance of Christ as Lord and Master was whole-hearted, if our prayer for and claiming of the Holy Spirit to guide and control was sincere, surely there can be no thought of not giving God each day sufficient time, our very best time, for receiving and increasing in us what is indispensable to a life for Christ's glory and in His service.

You tell me there are many Christians who are content with ten minutes or a quarter of an hour. There are, but you will certainly not as a rule find them strong Christians. And the Students' Movement is pleading with God, above everything, that He would meet to train a race of devoted, whole-hearted young men and women. Christ asked great sacrifices of His disciples; He has perhaps asked little of you as yet. But now He allows, He invites, He longs for you to make some. Sacrifices make strong men. Sacrifices help

wonderfully to wrench us away from earth and self-pleasing, and lift us heavenward. Do not try to pare down the time limit of the morning watch to less than the half-hour. There can be no question about the possibility of finding the time. Ten minutes from sleep, ten from company or amusement ,ten from lessons. How easy where the heart is right, hungering to know God and His will perfectly!

If you feel that you do not feel the need of so much time, and know not how to wait, we are content you should speak of your quiet time, or your hour of prayer. God may graciously, later on, draw you out to the morning watch. But do not undertake it unless you feel your heart stirred with the determination to make a sacrifice, and have full time for intimate intercourse with God. But if you are ready to do this, we urge you to join. The very fact of setting apart such a period helps to awaken the feeling: I have a great work to do, and I need time for it. It strengthens in your heart the conviction: If I am to be kept all this day without sin I must have time to get near to God. It will give your Bible study new point, as you find time, between the reading, to be still and bow in humility for the Holy Spirit’s hidden working, and wait till you get some real apprehension of God’s will for you, through the Word. And, by the grace of God, it may help you to begin that habit of specific and definite intercession of which the Church so surely stands In need. Students! you know not whether in your future life your time may be more limited, your circumstances more unfavorable, your Christian earnestness feebler. Now is the accepted time. Today, as the Holy Ghost saith. Listen to the invitation of your brethren in all lands, and fear not to form an undiscourageable resolution to spend at least half an hour each morning *with God alone.*

Absolute Surrender

by Andrew Murray

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Absolute Surrender

by Andrew Murray

ABSOLUTE SURRENDER

"And Ben-hadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together: and there were thirty and two kings with him, and horses, and chariots: and he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it. And he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith Benhadad, Thy silver and thy gold is mine; thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine. And the king of Israel answered and said, My lord, 0 king, according to thy saying, I am thine and all that I have" (I Kings 20:1-4).

Ahab gave what was asked of him by Benhadad - absolute surrender. I want to use these words: "My lord, 0 king, according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have," as the words of absolute surrender with which every child of God ought to yield himself to his Father. We have heard it before, but we need to hear it very definitely-the condition of God's blessing is absolute surrender of all into His hands. Praise God! If our hearts are willing for that, there is no end to what God will do for us, and to the blessing God will bestow.

Absolute surrender-let me tell you where I got those words. I used them myself often, and you have heard them numerous times. But once, in Scotland, I was in a company where we were talking about the condition of Christ's Church, and what the great need of the Church and of believers is. There was in our company a godly Christian worker who has much to do in training other workers for Christ, and I asked him what he would say was the great need of the Church-the message that ought to be preached. He answered very quietly and simply and determinedly:

"Absolute surrender to God is the one thing."

The words struck me as never before. And that man began to tell how, in the Christian workers with whom he had to deal, he finds that if they are sound on that point, they are willing to be taught and helped, and they always improve. Whereas, others who are not sound there very often go back and leave the work. The condition for obtaining God's full blessing is absolute surrender to Him.

And now, I desire by God's grace to give to you this message-that your God in heaven answers the prayers which you have offered for blessing on yourselves and for blessing on those around you by this one demand: Are you willing to surrender yourselves absolutely into His hands? What is our answer to be? God knows there are hundreds of hearts who have said it, and there are hundreds more who long to say it but hardly dare to do so. And there are hearts who have said it, but who have yet miserably failed, and who feel themselves condemned because they did not find the secret of the power to live that life. May God have a word for all!

Let me say, first of all, that God claims it from us.

GOD EXPECTS YOUR SURRENDER

Yes, it has its foundation in the very nature of God. God cannot do otherwise. Who is God? He is the Fountain of life, the only Source of existence and power and goodness. Throughout the universe there is nothing good but what God works. God has created the sun, the moon, the stars, the flowers, the trees, and the grass. Are they not

all absolutely surrendered to God? Do they not allow God to work in them just what He pleases? When God clothes the lily with its beauty, is it not yielded up, surrendered, given over to God as He works in it its beauty? And God's redeemed children, oh, can you think that God can do His work if there is only half or a part of them surrendered? God cannot do it. God is life, love, blessing, power, and infinite beauty, and God delights in communicating Himself to every child who is prepared to receive Him. But ah! this one lack of absolute surrender is just the thing that hinders God. And now He comes, and as God, He claims it.

You know in daily life what absolute surrender is. You know that everything has to be given up to its special, definite object and service. I have a pen in my pocket, and that pen is absolutely surrendered to the one work of writing. That pen must be absolutely surrendered to my hand if I am to write properly with it. If another holds it partly, I cannot write properly. This coat is absolutely given up to me to cover my body. This building is entirely given up to religious services. And now, do you expect that in your immortal being, in the divine nature that you have received by regeneration, God can work His work, every day and every hour, unless you are entirely given up to Him? God cannot. The temple of Solomon was absolutely surrendered to God when it was dedicated to Him. And every one of us is a temple of God, in which God will dwell and work mightily on one condition-absolute surrender to Him. God claims it, God is worthy of it, and without it God cannot work His blessed work in us.

God not only claims it, but God will work it Himself.

GOD ACCOMPLISHES YOUR SURRENDER

I am sure there is many a heart that says: "Ah, but that absolute surrender implies so much!" Someone says: "Oh, I have passed through so much trial and suffering, and there is so much of the self-life still remaining. I dare not face entirely giving it up because I know it will cause so much trouble and agony."

Alas! alas! that God's children have such thoughts of Him, such cruel thoughts. I come with a message to those who are fearful and anxious. God does not ask you to give the perfect surrender in your strength, or by the power of your will; God is willing to work it in you. Do we not read: "it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13)? And that is what we should seek-to go on our faces before God, until our hearts learn to believe that the everlasting God Himself will come in to turn out what is wrong. He will conquer what is evil, and work what is well pleasing in His blessed sight. God Himself will work it in you.

Look at the men in the Old Testament, like Abraham. Do you think it was by accident that God found that man, the father of the faithful and the friend of God? Do you think that it was Abraham himself, apart from God, who had such faith and such obedience and such devotion? You know it is not so. God raised him up and prepared him as an instrument for His glory.

Did God not say to Pharaoh: "For this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power" (Exodus 9:16)?

And if God said that of him, will God not say it far more of every child of His?

Oh, I want to encourage you, and I want you to cast away every fear. Come with that feeble desire. If there is the fear which says-"Oh, my desire is not strong enough. I am not willing for everything that maycome , and I do not feel bold enough to say I can conquer everything"-l implore you, learn to know and trust your God now. Say: "My God, I am willing that You should make me willing." If there is anything holding you back, or any sacrifice

you are afraid of making, come to God now and prove how gracious your God is. Do not be afraid that He will command from you what He will not bestow.

God comes and offers to work this absolute surrender in you. All these searchings and hungerings and longings that are in your heart, I tell you, they are the drawings of the divine magnet, Christ Jesus. He lived a life of absolute surrender. He has possession of you; He is living in your heart by His Holy Spirit. You have hindered and hindered Him terribly, but He desires to help you to get a hold of Him entirely. And He comes and draws you now by His message and words. Will you not come and trust God to work in you that absolute surrender to Himself Yes, blessed be God! He can do it, and He will do it.

God not only claims it and works it, but God accepts it when we bring it to Him.

GOD ACCEPTS YOUR SURRENDER

God works it in the secret of our heart; God urges us by the hidden power of His Holy Spirit to come and speak it out, and we have to bring and yield to Him that absolute surrender. But remember, when you come and bring God that absolute surrender, it may, as far as your feelings or your consciousness go, be a thing of great imperfection. You may doubt and hesitate and say:

"Is it absolute?"

But, oh, remember there was once a man to whom Christ had said: "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:23). And his heart was afraid, and he cried out: "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24).

That was a faith that triumphed over Satan, and the evil spirit was cast out. And if you come and say: "Lord, I yield myself in absolute surrender to my God," even though you do so with a trembling heart and with the consciousness: "I do not feel the power. I do not feel the determination. I do not feel the assurance," it will succeed. Do not be afraid, but come-just as you are. Even in the midst of your trembling the power of the Holy Spirit will work.

Have you not yet learned the lesson that the Holy Spirit works with mighty power, while on the human side everything appears feeble? Look at the Lord Jesus Christ in Gethsemane. We read that He, "through the eternal Spirit" (Hebrews 9:14), offered Himself a sacrifice unto God. The Almighty Spirit of God was enabling Him to do it. And yet what agony and fear and exceeding sorrow came over Him, and how He prayed! Externally, you can see no sign of the mighty power of the Spirit, but the Spirit of God was there. And even so, while you are feeble and fighting and trembling, with faith in the hidden work of God's Spirit do not fear, but yield yourself.

And when you do yield yourself in absolute surrender, let it be with the faith that God does now accept it. That is the great point, and that is what we so often miss-that believers should be thus occupied with God in this matter of surrender. Be occupied with God. We want to get help, every one of us, so that in our daily life God will be clearer to us, God will have the right place, and be "all in all." And if we are to have that through life, let us begin now and look away from ourselves and look up to God. Let each believe- I, a poor worm on earth and a trembling child of God, full of failure, sin, and fear, bow here, and no one knows what passes through my heart. I simply say, "Oh God, I accept Your terms. I have pleaded for blessing on myself and others. I have accepted Your terms of absolute surrender." While your heart says that in deep silence, remember there is a God present that takes note

of it, and writes it down in His book. There is a God present who at that very moment takes possession of you. You may not feel it, you may not realize it, but God takes possession if you will trust Him. God not only claims it and works it and accepts it when I bring it, but God maintains it.

GOD MAINTAINS YOUR SURRENDER

That is the great difficulty with many. People say: "I have often been stirred at a meeting or at a convention, and I have consecrated myself to God.

But it has passed away. I know it may last for a week or for a month, but it fades away. After a time it is all gone."

But listen! It is because you do not believe what I am now going to tell you and remind you of. When God has begun the work of absolute surrender in you, and when God has accepted your surrender, then God holds Himself bound to care for it and to keep it.

Will you believe that?

In this matter of surrender, there are: God and 1-1 a worm, God the everlasting and omnipotent Jehovah. Worm, will you be afraid to trust yourself to this mighty God now? God is willing. Do you not believe that He can keep you continually, day by day, and moment by moment?

Moment by moment I'm kept in His love;

Moment by moment I've life from above.

If God allows the sun to shine on you moment by moment, without intermission, will God not let His life shine on you every moment? And why have you not experienced it? Because you have not trusted God for it, and you do not surrender yourself absolutely to God in that trust.

A life of absolute surrender has its difficulties. I do not deny that. Yes, it has something far more than difficulties: it is a life that with men is absolutely impossible. But by the grace of God, by the power of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, it is a life to which we are destined, and a life that is possible for us, praise God! Let us believe that God will maintain it.

Some of you have read the words of that aged saint who, on his ninetieth birthday, told of all God's goodness to him- I mean George Muller. What did he say he believed to be the secret of his happiness and of all the blessing which God had given him? He said he believed there were two reasons. The one was that he had been enabled by grace to maintain a good conscience before God day by day. The other was that he was a lover of God's Word. Ah, yes, a good conscience is complete obedience to God day by day, and fellowship with God everyday in His Word and prayer-that is a life of absolute surrender.

Such a life has two sides-on one side, absolute surrender to work what God wants you to do; on the other side, to let God work what He wants to do.

First, to do what God wants you to do.

Give yourselves up absolutely to the will of God. You know something of that will; not enough, far from all. But say absolutely to the Lord God: "By Your grace I desire to do Your will in everything, every moment of every day." Say: "Lord God, not a word upon my tongue but for Your glory. Not a movement of my temper but for Your glory. Not an affection of love or hate in my heart but for Your glory, and according to Your blessed will."

Someone says: "Do you think that possible?"

I ask, What has God promised you, and what can God do to fill a vessel absolutely surrendered to Him? Oh, God wants to bless you in a way beyond what you expect. From the beginning, ear has not heard, neither has the eye seen, what God has prepared for them that wait for Him (I Corinthians 2:9). God has prepared unheard-of-things, blessings much more wonderful than you can imagine, more mighty than you can conceive. They are divine blessings. Oh, say now:

"I give myself absolutely to God, to His will, to do only what God wants."

It is God who will enable you to carry out the surrender.

And, on the other side, come and say: "I give myself absolutely to God, to let Him work in me to will and to do of His good pleasure, as He has promised to do."

Yes, the living God wants to work in His children in a way that we cannot understand, but that God's Word has revealed. He wants to work in us every moment of the day. God is willing to maintain our life. Only let our absolute surrender be one of simple, childlike., and unbounded trust.

GOD BLESSES WHEN YOU SURRENDER

This absolute surrender to God brings wonderful blessings.

What Ahab said to his enemy, King Benhadad-"My lord, 0 king, according to thy word I am thine, and all that I have"will we not say to our God and loving Father? If we do say it, God's blessing will come upon us. God wants us to be separate from the world. We are called to come out from the world that hates God. Come out for God, and say: "Lord, anything for You." If you say that with prayer, and speak that into God's ear, He will accept it, and He will teach you what it means.

I say again, God will bless you. You have been praying for blessing. But do remember, there must be absolute surrender. At every tea-table you see it. Why is tea poured into that cup? Because it is empty, and given up for the tea. But put ink or vinegar or wine into it, and will they pour the tea into the vessel? And can God fill you, can God bless you if you are not absolutely surrendered to Him? He cannot. Let us believe God has wonderful blessings for us if we will but stand up for God and say, be it with a trembling will, yet with a believing heart:

"O God, I accept Your demands. I am Yours and all that I have. Absolute surrender is what my soul yields to You by divine grace."

You may not have such strong, clear feelings of surrender as you would like to have, but humble yourselves in

His sight, and acknowledge that you have grieved the Holy Spirit by your self-will, selfconfidence, and self-effort. Bow humbly before Him in the confession of that, and ask Him to break the heart and to bring you into the dust before Him. Then, as you bow before Him, just accept God's teaching that in your flesh "there dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18), and that nothing will help you except another life which must come in. You must deny self once and for all. Denying self must every moment be the power of your life, and then Christ will come in and take possession of you.

When was Peter delivered? When was the change accomplished? The change began with Peter weeping, and the Holy Spirit came down and filled his heart.

God the Father loves to give us the power of the Spirit. We have the Spirit of God dwelling within us. We come to God confessing that, and praising God for it, and yet confessing how we have grieved the Spirit. And then we bow our knees to the Father to ask that He would strengthen us with all might by the Spirit in the inner man, and that He would fill us with His mighty power. And as the Spirit reveals Christ to us, Christ comes to live in our hearts forever, and the self-life is cast out.

Let us bow before God in humility, and in that humility confess before Him the state of the whole Church. No words can tell the sad state of the Church of Christ on earth. I wish I had words to speak what I sometimes feel about it. Just think of the Christians around you. I do not speak of nominal Christians, or of professing Christians, but I speak of hundreds and thousands of honest, earnest Christians who are not living a life in the power of God or to His glory. So little power, so little devotion or consecration to God, so little perception of the truth that a Christian is a man utterly surrendered to God's will! Oh, we want to confess the sins of God's people around us, and to humble ourselves.

We are members of that sickly body. The sickliness of the body will hinder us and break us down, unless we come to God. We must, in confession, separate ourselves from partnership with worldliness, with coldness toward each other. We must give ourselves up to be entirely and wholly for God.

How much Christian work is being done in the spirit of the flesh and in the power of self! How much work, day by day, in which human energy-our will and our thoughts about the work-is continually manifested, and in which there is little waiting upon God and upon the power of the Holy Spirit! Let us make a confession. But as we confess the state of the Church, and the feebleness and sinfulness of work for God among us, let us come back to ourselves. Who is there who truly longs to be delivered from the power of the self-life, who truly acknowledges that it is the power of self and the flesh, and who is willing to cast all at the feet of Christ? There is deliverance.

I heard of one who had been an earnest Christian, and who spoke about the "cruel" thought of separation and death. But you do not think that, do you? What are we to think of separation and death? This-death was the path to glory for Christ. For the joy set before Him He endured the cross. The cross was the birthplace of His everlasting glory. Do you love Christ? Do you long to be in Christ, and yet not like Him? Let death be to you the most desirable thing on earthdeath to self, and fellowship with Christ. Separation-do you think it a hard thing to be called to be entirely free from the world, and by that separation to be united to God and His love, by separation to become prepared for living and walking with God every day? Surely one ought to say: "Anything to bring me to separation, to death, for a life of full fellowship with God and Christ."

Come and cast this self-life and flesh-life at the feet of Jesus. Then trust Him. Do not worry yourselves with trying to understand all about it, but come in the living faith that Christ will come into you with the power of His

death and the power of His life. Then the Holy Spirit will bring the whole Christ-Christ crucified and risen and living in glory-into your heart.

Absolute Surrender

by Andrew Murray

"THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS LOVE"

I want to look at the fact of a life filled with the Holy Spirit more from the practical side. I want to show how this life will reveal itself in our daily walk and conduct.

Under the Old Testament you know the Holy Spirit often came upon men as a divine Spirit of revelation to reveal the mysteries of God, or for power to do the work of God. But He did not dwell in them then. Now, many just want the Old Testament gift of power for work. But, they know very little of the New Testament gift of the indwelling Spirit, animating and renewing the whole life. When God gives the Holy Spirit, His great object is the formation of a holy character. It is a gift of a holy mind and spiritual disposition, and what we need, above everything else, is to say:

"I must have the Holy Spirit sanctifying my whole inner life if I am really to live for God's glory. "

You might say that when Christ promised the Spirit to the disciples, He did so that they might have power to be witnesses. True, but then they received the Holy Spirit in such heavenly power and reality that He took possession of their whole being at once and so fitted them as holy men for doing the work with power as they had to do it. Christ spoke of power to the disciples, but it was the Spirit filling their whole being that worked the power.

I wish now to dwell upon the passage found in Galatians 5:22:

"The fruit of the Spirit is love."

We read that "Love is the fulfilling of the law"' (Romans 13: 10), and my desire is to speak on love as a fruit of the Spirit with a twofold object. One is that this word may be a searchlight in our hearts, and give us a test by which to try all our thoughts about the Holy Spirit and all our experience of the holy life. Let us try ourselves by this word. Has this been our daily habit, to seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of love? "The fruit of the Spirit is love." Has it been our experience that the more we have of the Holy Spirit, the more loving we become? In claiming the Holy Spirit, we should make this the first object of our expectation. The Holy Spirit comes as a Spirit of love.

Oh, if this were true in the Church of Christ, how different her state would be! May God help us to get hold of this simple, heavenly truth that the fruit of the Spirit is a love which appears in the life. Just as the Holy Spirit gets real possession of the life, the heart will be filled with real, divine, universal love.

One of the great causes why God cannot bless His Church is the lack of love. When the body is divided, there cannot be strength. In the time of their great religious wars, when Holland stood out so nobly against Spain, one of their mottoes was: "Unity gives strength." It is only when God's people stand as one body, one before God in the fellowship of love, one toward another in deep affection, one before the world in a love that the world can see-it is only then that they will have power to secure the blessing which they ask of God. Remember that if a vessel that ought to be one whole is cracked into many pieces, it cannot be filled. You can take one part of the vessel and dip out a little water into that, but if you want the vessel full, the vessel must be whole. That is literally true of

Christ's Church. And if there is one thing we must pray for still, it is this-Lord, melt us together into one by the power of the Holy Spirit. Let the Holy Spirit, who at Pentecost made them all of one heart and one soul, do His blessed work among us. Praise God, we can love each other in a divine love, for "the fruit of the Spirit is love." Give yourselves up to love, and the Holy Spirit will come; receive the Spirit, and He will teach you to love more.

GOD IS LOVE

Now, why is it that the fruit of the Spirit is love? Because God is love (I John 4:8).

And what does that mean?

It is the very nature and being of God to delight in communicating Himself. God has no selfishness; God keeps nothing to Himself. God's nature is to be always giving. You see it, in the sun and the moon and the stars, in every flower, in every bird in the air, in every fish in the sea. God communicates life to His creatures. And the angels around His throne, the seraphim and cherumbim who are flames of firewhere does their glory come from? It comes from God because He is love, and He imparts to them part of His brightness and His blessedness. And we, His redeemed children-God delights to pour His love into us. Why? Because, as I said, God keeps nothing for Himself. From eternity God had His only begotten Son, and the Father gave Him all things, and nothing that God had was kept back. "God is love."

One of the old Church fathers said that we cannot better understand the Trinity than as a revelation of divine lovethe Father, the loving One, the Fountain of love-the Son, the beloved one, the Reservoir of love, in whom the love was poured out-and the Spirit, the living love that united both and then overflowed into this world. The Spirit of Pentecost, the Spirit of the Father, and the Spirit of the Son is love. And when the Holy Spirit comes to us and to other men, will He be less a Spirit of love than He is in God? It cannot be; He cannot change His nature. The Spirit of God is love, and "the fruit of the Spirit is love."

MANKIND NEEDS LOVE

Why is that so? That was the one great need of mankind, that was the thing which Christ's redemption came to accomplish: to restore love to this world.

When man sinned, why was it that he sinned? Selfishness triumphed-he sought self instead of God. And just look! Adam at once begins to accuse the woman of having led him astray. Love to God had gone; love to man was lost. Look again: of the first two children of Adam, the one becomes a murderer of his brother.

Does that not teach us that sin had robbed the world of love? Ah! what a proof the history of the world has been of love having been lost! There may have been beautiful examples of love even among the heathen, but only as a little remnant of what was lost. One of the worst things sin did for man was to make him selfish, for selfishness cannot love.

The Lord Jesus Christ came down from heaven as the Son of God's love. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16). God's Son came to show what love is , and He lived a life of love here on earth in fellowship with His disciples, in compassion over the poor and miserable, in love even to His enemies. And, He died the death of love. And when He went back to heaven, whom did He send down? The Spirit of love, to come and banish selfishness and envy and pride, and bring the love of God into the hearts of men. "The fruit of

the Spirit is love."

And what was the preparation for the promise of the Holy Spirit? You know that promise as found in the fourteenth chapter of John's Gospel. But remember what precedes in the thirteenth chapter. Before Christ promised the Holy Spirit, He gave a new commandment, and about that new commandment He said wonderful things. One thing was: "Even as I have loved you, so love ye one another." To them His dying love was to be the only law of their conduct and fellowship with each other. What a message to those fishermen, to those men full of pride and selfishness! "Learn to love each other," said Christ, "as I have loved you." And by the grace of God they did it. When Pentecost came, they were of one heart and one soul. Christ did it for them.

And now He calls us to live and to walk in love. He demands that though a man hate you, still you love him. True love cannot be conquered by anything in heaven or on earth. The more hatred there is, the more love triumphs through it all and shows its true nature. This is the love that Christ commanded His disciples to exercise.

What more did He say? "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

You all know what it is to wear a badge. And Christ said to His disciples in effect: "I give you a badge, and that badge is love. That is to be your mark. It is the only thing in heaven or on earth by which men can know me." Do we not begin to fear that love has fled from the earth? That if we were to ask the world: "Have you seen us wear the badge of love?." the world would say: "No, what we have heard of the Church of Christ is that there is not a place where there is no quarreling and separation." Let us ask God with one heart that we may wear the badge of Jesus' love. God is able to give it.

LOVE CONQUERS SELFISHNESS

"The fruit of the Spirit is love." Why? Because nothing but love can expel and conquer our selfishness.

Self is the great curse, whether in its relation to God, or to our fellow-men in general, or to fellowChristians, thinking of ourselves and seeking our own. Self is our greatest curse. But, praise God, Christ came to redeem us from self. We sometimes talk about deliverance from the self-life-and thank God for every word that can be said about it to help us, But I am afraid some people think deliverance from the self-life means that now they are no longer going to have any. trouble in serving God. They forget that deliverance from self-life means to be a vessel overflowing with love to everybody all the day.

And there you have the reason why many people pray for the power of the Holy Spirit. They get something, but oh, so little! because they prayed for power for work, and power for blessing, but they have not prayed for power for full deliverance from self. That means not only the righteous self in fellowship with God, but the unloving self in fellowship with men. And there is deliverance. "The fruit of the Spirit is love." I bring you the glorious promise of Christ that He is able to fill our hearts with love.

A great many of us try hard at times to love. We try to force ourselves to love, and I do not say that is wrong; it is better than nothing. But the end of it is always very sad. "I fail continually," many must confess. And what is the reason? The reason is simply this-they have never learned to believe and accept the truth that the Holy Spirit can pour God's love into their heart. That blessed text has often been limited!-"The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts" (Romans 5:5). It has often been understood in this sense: It means the love of God to me. Oh, what a

limitation! That is only the beginning. The love of God is always the love of God in its entirety, in its fullness as an indwelling power. It is a love of God to me that leaps back to Him in love, and overflows to my fellow-men in love-God's love to me, and my love to God, and my love to my fellowmen. The three are one; you cannot separate them.

Do believe that the love of God can be shed abroad in your heart and mind so that we can love all the day.

"Ah!" you say, "how little I have understood that!"

Why is a lamb always gentle? Because that is its nature. Does it cost the lamb any trouble to be gentle? No. Why not? It is so beautiful and gentle. Has a lamb to study to be gentle? No. Why does that come so easy? It is its nature. And a wolf-why does it cost a wolf no trouble to be cruel, and to put its fangs into the poor lamb or sheep? Because that is its nature. It does not have to summon up its courage; the wolfnature is. there.

And how can I learn to love? I cannot learn to love until the Spirit of God fills my heart with God's love, and I begin to long for God's love in a very different sense from which I have sought it so selfishly-as a comfort, a joy, a happiness, and a pleasure to myself. I will not learn it until I realize that "God is love," and to claim and receive it as an indwelling power for selfsacrifice. I will not love until I begin to see that my glory, my blessedness, is to be like God and like Christ, in giving up everything in myself for my fellow-men. May God teach us this! Oh, the divine blessedness of the love with which the Holy Spirit can fill our hearts! "The fruit of the Spirit is love."

LOVE IS GOD'S GIFT

Once again I ask, Why must this be so? And my answer is: Without this we cannot live the daily life of love.

How often, when we speak about the consecrated life, we have to speak about temper, and people have sometimes said: "You make too much of temper."

I do not think we can make too much of it. Think for a moment of a clock and of what its hands mean. The hands tell me what is within the clock, and if I see that the hands stand still, or that the hands point wrong, or that the clock is slow or fast, I say that something inside the clock is not working properly. And temper is just like the revelation that the clock gives of what is within. Temper is a proof whether the love of Christ is filling the heart or not. How many there are who find it easier in church, or in prayer meeting, or in work for the Lord-diligent, earnest work-to be holy and happy than in the daily life with wife and children. How many find it easier to be holy and happy outside the home than in it! Where is the love of God? In Christ. God has prepared for us a wonderful redemption in Christ, and He longs to make something supernatural of us. Have we learned to long for it, ask for it, and expect it in its fullness?

Then there is the tongue! We sometimes speak of the tongue when we talk of the better life, and the restful life, but just think what liberty many Christians give to their tongues. They say:

"I have a right to think what I like."

When they speak about each other, when they speak about their neighbors, when they speak about other Christians, how often there are sharp remarks! God keep me from saying anything that would be unloving. God shut my mouth if I am not to speak in tender love. But what I am saying is a fact. How often sharp criticism, sharp

judgment, hasty opinion, unloving words, secret contempt of each other, secret condemnation of each other are found among Christians who are banded together in work! Oh, just as a mother's love covers her children and delights in them and has the tenderest compassion with their foibles or failures, so there ought to be in the heart of every believer a motherly love toward every brother and sister in Christ. Have you aimed at that? Have you sought it? Have you ever pleaded for it? Jesus Christ said: "As I have loved you that. ye also love one another" (John 13:34). And He did not put that among the other commandments, but He said in effect:

"That is a new commandment, the one commandment: Love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34).

It is in our daily life and conduct that the fruit of the Spirit is love. From that comes all the graces and virtues in which love is manifested-joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness-no sharpness or hardness in your tone, no unkindness or selfishness, meekness before God and man. You see that all these are the gentler virtues. I have often thought as I read those words in Colossians, "Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering" (Colossians 3:12), that if we had written this, we should have put in the foreground the strong virtues, such as zeal, courage, and diligence. But we need to see how the gentler, the most tender virtues are especially connected with dependence on the Holy Spirit. These are indeed heavenly graces. They never were found in the heathen world. Christ was needed to come from heaven to teach us. Your blessedness is long-suffering, meekness, kindness; your glory is humility before God. The fruit of the Spirit that He brought from heaven out of the heart of the crucified Christ, and that He gives in our heart, is first and foremost-love.

You know what John says: "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another; God dwelleth in us" (I John 4:12). That is, I cannot see God, but as a compensation I can see my brother, and if I love him, God dwells in me. Is that really true? That I cannot see God, but I must love my brother, and God will dwell in me? Loving my brother is the way to real fellowship with God. You know what John further says in that most solemn test, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (I John 4:20). There is a brother, a most unlovable man. He worries you every time you meet him. He is of the very opposite disposition to yours. You are a careful businessman, and you have to associate with him in your business. He is most untidy, unbusiness-like. You say:

"I cannot love him."

Oh, friend, you have not learned the lesson that Christ wanted to teach above everything. Let a man be what he will, you are to love him. Love is to be the fruit of the Spirit all the day and every day. Yes, listen! If you don't love that unlovable man whom you have seen, how can you love God whom you have not seen? You can deceive yourself with beautiful thoughts about loving God. You must prove your love to God by your love to your brother; that is the one standard by which God will judge your love to Him. If the love of God is in your heart, you will love your brother. The fruit of the Spirit is love.

And what is the reason that God's Holy Spirit cannot come in power? Is it not possible?

You remember the comparison I used in speaking of the vessel. I can dip a little water into a small vessel, but if a vessel is to be full, it must be unbroken. And the children of God, wherever they come together, to whatever church or mission or society they belong, must love each other intensely, or the Spirit of God cannot do His work. We talk about grieving the Spirit of God by worldliness and ritualism and formality and error and indifference. But, I tell you, the one thing above everything that grieves God's Spirit is this lack of love. Let every heart search

itself, and ask that God may search it.

OUR LOVE SHOWS GOD'S POWER

Why are we taught that "the fruit of the Spirit is love"? Because the Spirit of God has come to make our daily life an exhibition of divine power and a revelation of what God can do for His children.

In the second and the fourth chapters of Acts, we read that the disciples were of one heart and of one soul. During the three years they had walked with Christ, they never had been in that spirit. All Christ's teaching could not make them of one heart and one soul. But the Holy Spirit came from heaven and shed the love of God in their hearts, and they were of one heart and one soul. The same Holy Spirit that brought the love of heaven into their hearts must fill us, too. Nothing less will do. Even as Christ did, one might preach love for three years with the tongue of an angel, but that would not teach any man to love unless the power of the Holy Spirit should come upon him to bring the love of heaven into his heart.

Think of the Church at large. What divisions! Think of the different bodies. Take the question of holiness, take the question of the cleansing blood, take the question of the baptism of the Spirit-what differences are caused among dear believers by such questions! That there are differences of opinion does not trouble me. We do not have the same constitution and temperament and mind. But how often hate, bitterness, contempt, separation, and unlovingness are caused by the holiest truths of God's Word! Our doctrines, our creeds, have been more important than love. We often think we are valiant for the truth, and we forget God's command to speak the truth in love. And it was so in the time of the Reformation between the Lutheran and Calvinistic churches. What bitterness there was in regard to communion, which was meant to be the bond of union among all believers! And so, through the ages, the very dearest truths of God have become mountains that have separated us.

If we want to pray in power, and if we want to expect the Holy Spirit to come down in power, and if we indeed want God to pour out His Spirit, we must enter into a covenant with God that we will love one another with a heavenly love.

Are you ready for that? Only that is true love that is large enough to take in all God's children, the most unloving and unlovable and unworthy and unbearable and trying. If my vow-absolute surrender to God-was sincere, then it must mean absolute surrender to the divine love to fill me. I must be a servant of love to love every child of God around me. "The fruit of the Spirit is love."

Oh, God did something wonderful when He gave Christ, at His right hand, the Holy Spirit to come down out of the heart of the Father and His everlasting love. And how we have degraded the Holy Spirit into a mere power by which we have to do our work! God forgive us! Oh, that the Holy Spirit might be held in honor as a power to fill us with the very life and nature of God and of Christ!

CHRISTIAN WORK REQUIRES LOVE

"The fruit of the Spirit is love." I ask once again, Why is it so? And the answer comes: That is the only power in which Christians really can do their work. Yes, it is love that we need. We want not only love that is to bind us to each other, but we want a divine love in our work for the lost around us. Oh, do we not often undertake a great deal of work-just as men undertake work of philanthropy-from a natural spirit of compassion for our fellow-men? Do we not often undertake Christian work because our minister. or friend calls us to it? And do we not often

perform Christian work with a certain zeal but without having had a baptism of love?

People often ask: "What is the baptism of fire?"

I have answered more than once: "I know no fire like the fire of God, the fire of everlasting love that consumed the sacrifice on Calvary." The baptism of love is what the Church needs, and to get that we must begin at once to get down on our faces before God in confession, and plead:

"Lord, let love from heaven flow down into my heart. I am giving up my life to pray and live as one who has, given himself up for the everlasting love to dwell in and fill him."

Ali, yes, if the love of God were in our hearts, what a difference it would make! There are hundreds of believers who say:

"I work for Christ, and I feel I could work much harder, but I do not have the gift. I do not know how or where to begin. I do not know what I can do."

Brother, sister, ask God to baptize you with the Spirit of love, and love will find its way. Love is a fire that will burn through every difficulty. You may be a shy, hesitating person, who cannot speak well, but love can burn through everything. God fills us with love! We need it for our work.

You have read many a touching story of love expressed, and you have said, How beautiful! I heard one not long ago. A lady had been asked to speak at a Rescue Home where there were a number of poor women. As she arrived there and passed by the window with the matron, she saw a wretched woman sitting outside, and asked:

"Who is that?"

The matron answered: "She has been into the house thirty or forty times, and she has always gone away again. Nothing can be done with her, she is so low and hard." But the lady said: "She must come in."

The matron then said: "We have been waiting for you, and the company is assembled, and you have only an hour for the address."

The lady replied: "No, this is of more importance"; and she went outside where the woman was sitting and said:

"My sister, what is the matter?"

"I am not your sister," was the reply.

The the lady laid her hand on her, and said: "Yes, I am your sister, and I love you"; and so she spoke until the heart of the poor woman was touched.

The conversation lasted some time, and the company was waiting patiently. Ultimately, the lady brought the woman into the room. There was the poor, wretched, degraded creature, full of shame. She would not sit on a chair, but sat down on a stool beside the speaker's seat, and she let her lean against her, with her arms around the

poor woman's neck, while, she spoke to the assembled people. And that love touched the woman's heart; she had found one who really loved her, and that love gave access to the love of Jesus.

Praise God! there is love on earth in the hearts of God's children; but oh, that there were more!

O God, baptize our ministers with a tender love, and our missionaries, our Bible readers, our workers, and our young men's and young women's associations. Oh, that God would begin with us now, and baptize us with heavenly love!

LOVE INSPIRES INTERCESSION

Once again. It is only love that can fit us for the work of intercession.

I have said that love must fit us for our work. Do you know what the hardest and the most important work is that has to be done for this sinful world? It is the work of intercession, the work of going to God and taking time to lay hold of Him.

A man may be an earnest Christian, an earnest minister, and a man may do good, but alas! how often he has to confess that he knows little of what it is to tarry with God. May God give us the great gift of an intercessory spirit, a spirit of prayer and supplication! Let me ask you in the name of Jesus not to let a day pass without praying for all saints, and for all God's people.

I find there are Christians who think little of that. I find there are prayer unions where they pray for the members, and not for all believers. I pray you, take time to pray for the Church of Christ. It is right to pray for the heathen, as I have already said. God help us to pray more for them. It is right to pray for missionaries and for evangelistic work and for the unconverted. But Paul did not tell people to pray for the heathen or the unconverted. Paul told them to pray for believers. Do make this your first prayer every day: "Lord, bless Thy saints everywhere."

The state of Christ's Church is indescribably low. Plead for God's people that He would visit them, plead for each other, plead for all believers who are trying to work for God. Let love fill your heart. Ask Christ to pour fresh love into you everyday. Try to grasp, by the Holy Spirit of God: I am separated unto the Holy Spirit, and the fruit of the Spirit is love. God help us to understand it.

May God grant that we learn day by day to wait more quietly upon Him. We must not wait upon God only for ourselves, or the power to do so will soon be lost. But, we must give ourselves up to the ministry and the love of intercession, and pray more for God's people in general, for God's people around us, for the Spirit of love in ourselves and in them, and for the work of God we are connected with. The answer will surely come, and our waiting upon God will be a source of untold blessing and power. "The fruit of the Spirit is love."

Have you a lack of love to confess before God? Then make confession and say before Him, "O Lord, my lack of heart, my lack of love-I confess it." And then, as you cast that lack at His feet, believe that the blood cleanses you, that Jesus comes in His mighty, cleansing, saving power to deliver you, and that He will give His Holy Spirit. "The Fruit of the Spirit is love."

Absolute Surrender

by Andrew Murray

SEPARATED UNTO THE HOLY SPIRIT

"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen ... and Saul. "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me -Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

"And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia" (Acts 13:1-4).

In the story of our text, we find some precious thoughts to guide us to what God would have of us, and what God would do for us. The great lesson of the verses quoted is this: The Holy Spirit is the director of the work of God upon the earth. And what we should do if we are to rightly work for God, and if God is to bless our work, is to see that we stand in a right relationship with the Holy Spirit. We must see that we give Him the place of honor that belongs to Him everyday. In all our work and (what is more) in all our Private, inner life, the Holy Spirit must always have the first place. Let me point out to you some of the precious thoughts our passage suggests.

First of all, we see that God has His own plans with regard to His Kingdom. His church at Antioch had been established. God had certain plans and intentions with regard to Asia and with regard to Europe. He had conceived them; they were His, and He made them known to His servants.

Our great Commander organizes every campaign, and His generals and officers do not always know the great plans. They often receive sealed orders, and they have to wait for Him to reveal their contents. God in heaven has wishes and a will, in regard to any work that ought to be done, and to the way in which it has to be done. Blessed is the man who receives God's secrets and works under Him.

Some years ago, at Wellington, South Africa, where I live, we opened a Mission Institute-what is counted there a fine, large building. At our opening services, the principal said something that I have never forgotten. He remarked:

"Last year we gathered here to lay the foundation stone, and what was there then to be seen? Nothing but rubbish and stones and bricks and ruins of an old building that had been pulled down. There we laid the foundation stone, and very few knew what the building was that was to rise. No one knew it perfectly in every detail except one man, the architect. In his mind it was all clear, and as the contractor and the mason and the carpenter came to do their work, they took their orders from him. The humblest laborer had to be obedient to orders. The structure rose, and this beautiful building has been completed. And just so," he added, "this building that we open today is but laying the foundation of a work of which only God knows what is to become."

But God has His workers and His plans clearly mapped out. Our position is to wait so that God may communicate to us as much of His will as is needful.

We simply have to be faithful in obedience, carrying out His orders. God has a plan for His Church on earth. But alas! we too often make our own plan. We think that we know what ought to be done. We ask God first to bless

our feeble efforts, instead of absolutely refusing to go unless God goes before us. God has planned for the work and the extension of His Kingdom. The Holy Spirit has had that work given in charge to Him, "The work whereunto I have called them." May God, therefore, help us all to be afraid of touching "the ark of God" (2 Samuel 6:6), except as we are led by the Holy Spirit.

Then the second thought-God is willing and able to reveal to His servants what His will is.

Yes, blessed be God, communications still come down from heaven! As we read here what the Holy Spirit said, so the Spirit will still speak to His Church and His people. In these latter days, He has often done it. He has come to individual men, and by His divine teaching He has led them out into fields of labor that others could not at first understand or approve. He has led them into ways and methods that did not appeal to the majority. But the Holy Spirit still, in our time, teaches His people. Thank God, in our foreign missionary societies and in our home missions, and in a thousand forms of work, the guiding of the Holy Spirit is known. But (we are all ready, I think, to confess) He is too little known. We have not learned to wait upon Him enough, and so we should make a solemn declaration before God: Oh God, we want to wait more for You to show us Your will.

Do not ask God only for power. Many a Christian has his own plan of working, but God must send the power. The man works in his own will, and God must give the grace-the one reason why God often gives so little grace and so little success. But let us all take our place before God, and say:

"What is done in the will of God, the strength of God will not be withheld from it. What is done in the will of God must have the mighty blessing of God."

And so let our first desire be to have the will of God revealed.

If you ask me, Is it any easy thing to get these communications from heaven, and to understand them? I can give you the answer. It is easy to those who are in proper fellowship with heaven, and who understand the art of waiting on God in prayer. How often we ask: How can a person know the will of God? And people want, when they are in perplexity, to pray very earnestly so that God would answer them at once. But God can only reveal His will to a heart that is humble and tender and empty. God can only reveal His will in perplexities and special difficulties to a heart that has learned to obey and honor Him loyally in little things and in daily life.

That brings me to the third thought- Note the disposition to which the Spirit reveals God's will.

What do we read here? There were a number of men ministering to the Lord and fasting, and the Holy Spirit came and spoke to them. Some people understand this passage as they would in reference to a missionary committee of our day. We see there is an open field, and we have had our missions in other fields. We are going to get on to that field. We have virtually settled that, and we pray about it. But the position was a very different one in those former days. I doubt whether any of them thought of Europe (for later on even Paul himself tried to go back into Asia) until the night vision called him by the will of God. Look at those men. God had done wonders. He had extended the Church to Antioch, and He had given rich and large blessing. Now, here were these men ministering to the Lord, serving Him with prayer and fasting. What a deep conviction they have-"It must all come directly from heaven. We are in fellowship with the risen Lord; we must have a close union with Him, and somehow He will let us know what He wants." And there they were, empty, ignorant, helpless, glad, and joyful, but deeply humbled.

"O Lord," they seem to say, "we are Your servants, and in fasting and prayer we wait upon You. What is Your will for us?"

Was it not the same with Peter? He was on the housetop, fasting and praying, and little did he think of the vision and the command to go to Caesarea. He was ignorant of what his work might be.

It is in hearts entirely surrendered to the Lord Jesus, separating themselves from the world, and even from ordinary religious exercises, and giving themselves up in intense prayer to look to their Lord, that the heavenly will of God will be made manifest.

You know that word fasting occurs a second time (in the third verse): "They fasted and prayed." When you pray, you love to go into your closet, accordin g to the command of Jesus, and shut the door. You shut out business and company and pleasure and anything that can distract, and you want to be alone with God. But in one way, even the material world follows you there. You must eat. These men wanted to shut themselves out from the influences of the material and the visible, and they fasted. What ,they ate was simply enough to supply the wants of nature. In the intensity of their souls, they thought to give expression to their letting go of everything on earth in their fasting before God. Oh, may God give us that intensity of desire-that separation from everything-because we want to wait upon God, that the Holy Spirit may reveal to us God's blessed will.

The fourth thought- What is now the will of God as the Holy Spirit reveals it? It is contained in one phrase: Separation unto the Holy Spirit. That is the keynote of the message from heaven.

"Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. The work is mine; and I care for it; and I have chosen these men and called them; and I want you who represent the Church of Christ upon earth to set them apart unto me."

Look at this heavenly message in its twofold aspect. The men were to be set apart to the Holy Spirit, and the Church was to do this separating work. The Holy Spirit could trust these men to do it in a right spirit. There they were abiding in fellowship with the heavenly. The Holy Spirit could say to them, "Do the work of separating these men." And these were the men the Holy Spirit had prepared, and He could say of them, "Let them be separated unto me."

Here we come to the very root-the very lifeof the need of Christian workers. The question is: What is needed so that the power of God would rest on us more mightily? What is needed so that the blessing of God would be poured out more abundantly among those poor, wretched people and perishing sinners among whom we labor? And the answer from heaven is:

"I want men separated unto the Holy Spirit."

What does that imply? You know that there are two spirits on earth. Christ said, when He spoke about the Holy Spirit: "The world cannot receive him" (John 14:17). Paul said: "We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is of God" (I Corinthians 2:12). That is the great want in every worker-the spirit of the world going out, and the Spirit of God coming in to take possession of the inner life and of the whole being.

I am sure there are workers who often cry to God for the Holy Spirit to come upon them as a Spirit of power for their work. When they feel that measure of power, and receive blessing, they thank God for it. But God wants

something more and something higher. God wants us to seek for the Holy Spirit as a Spirit of power in our own heart and life, to conquer self and cast out sin, and to work the blessed and beautiful image of Jesus into us.

There is a difference between the power of the Spirit as a gift and the power of the Spirit for the grace of a holy life. A man may often have a measure of the power of the Spirit, but if there is not a large measure of the Spirit as the Spirit of grace and holiness, the defect will be evident in his work. He may be made the means of conversion, but he never will help people on to a higher standard of spiritual life. When he passes away, a great deal of his work may pass away, too. But a man who is separated unto the Holy Spirit is a man who is given up to say:

"Father, let the Holy Spirit have full dominion over me, in my home, in my temper, in every word of my tongue, in every thought of my heart, in every feeling toward my fellow-men. Let the Holy Spirit have entire possession."

Is that what has been the longing and the convenant of your heart with your God-to be a man or a woman separated and given up unto the Holy Spirit? I pray you listen to the voice of heaven: "Separate me," said the Holy Spirit. Yes, separated unto the Holy Spirit. May God grant that the Word may enter into the very depths of our being to search us, and if we discover that we have not come out from the world entirely-if God discloses to us that selflife, self-will, self-exaltation are there-let us humble ourselves before Him.

Man, woman, brother, sister, you are a worker separated unto the Holy Spirit. Is that true? Has that been your longing desire? Has that been your surrender? Has that been what you have expected through faith in the power of our Risen and Almighty Lord Jesus? If not, here is the call of faith, and here is the key of blessing-separated unto the Holy Spirit. God write the word in our hearts!

I said the Holy Spirit spoke to that church as a church capable of doing that work. The Holy Spirit trusted them. God grant that our churches, our missionary societies, and our workers' unions, that all our directors and councils and committees may be men and women who are fit for the work of separating workers unto the Holy Spirit. We can ask God for that, too.

Then comes my fifth thought, and it is this: This holy partnership with the Holy Spirit in this work becomes a matter of consciousness and of action.

These men, what did they do? They set apart Paul and Barnabas, and then it is written of the two that they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Silica. Oh, what fellowship! The Holy Spirit in heaven doing part of the work, men on earth doing the other part. After the ordination of the men on earth, it is written in God's inspired Word that they were sent forth by the Holy Spirit.

And see how this partnership calls to new prayer and fasting. They had for a certain time been ministering to the Lord and fasting, perhaps days. The Holy Spirit speaks, and they have to do the work and to enter into partnership, and at once they come together for more prayer and fasting. That is the spirit in which they obey the command of their Lord. And that teaches us that it is not only in the beginning of our Christian work, but all along, that we need to have our strength in prayer. If there is one thought with regard to the Church of Christ which at times comes to me with overwhelming sorrow; if there is one thought in regard to my own life of which I am ashamed; if there is one thought of which I feel that the Church of Christ has not accepted and not grasped; if there is one thought which makes me pray to God: "Oh, teach us by Your grace, new things"-it is the wonderful power that prayer is meant to have in the Kingdom. We have so little availed ourselves of it.

We have all- read the expression of Christian in Bunyan's great work, when he found he had the key in his breast that should unlock the dungeon. We have the key that can unlock the dungeon of atheism for us. The Holy Spirit, into whose hands God has put the work, has been called "the executive of the Holy Trinity." The Holy Spirit has not only power, but He has the Spirit of love. He is brooding over this dark world and every sphere of work in it, and He is willing to bless. And why is there not more blessing? There can be only one answer. We have not honored the Holy Spirit as we should have done. Is there one who can say that that is not true? Is not every thoughtful heart ready to cry: "God forgive me that I have not honored the Holy Spirit as I should have done, that I have grieved Him, that I have allowed self, the flesh, and my own will to work where the Holy Spirit should have been honored! May God forgive me that I have allowed self, the flesh, and the will to actually have the place that God wanted the Holy Spirit to have."

Oh, the sin is greater than we know! No wonder that there is so much feebleness and failure in the Church of Christ!

Absolute Surrender

by Andrew Murray

PETER'S REPENTANCE

"And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly" (Luke 22:61, 62).

That was the turning point in the life of Peter. Christ had said to him: "Thou canst not follow me now" (John 13:36). Peter was not in a fit state to follow Christ, because he had not been brought to an end of himself. He did not know himself, and he therefore could not follow Christ. But when he went out and wept bitterly, then came the great change. Christ previously said to him: "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32). Here is the point Where Peter was converted from self to Christ.

I thank God for the story of Peter. I do not know a man in the Bible who gives us greater comfort. When we look at his character, so full of failures, and at what Christ made him by the power of the Holy Spirit, there is hope for every one of us. But remember, before Christ could fill Peter with the Holy Spirit and make a new man of him, he had to go out and weep bitterly; he had to be humbled. If we want to understand this, I think there are four points that we must look at. First, let us look at Peter the devoted disciple of Jesus; next, at Peter as he lived the life of self; then, at Peter in his repentance; and last, at what Christ made of Peter by the Holy Spirit.

PETER THE DEVOTED DISCIPLE OF CHRIST

Christ called Peter to forsake his nets and follow Him. Peter did it at once, and afterward he could rightly say to the Lord:

"We have forsaken all and followed thee" (Matthew 19:27).

Peter was a man of absolute surrender; he gave up all to follow Jesus. Peter was also a man of ready obedience. You remember Christ said to him, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets." Peter the fisherman knew there were no fish there, for they had been fishing all night and had caught nothing; but he said: "At thy word I will let down the net" (Luke 5:4,5). He submitted to the word of Jesus. Further, he was a man of great faith. When he saw Christ walking on the sea, he said: "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee" (Matthew 14:-28). At the voice of Christ, he stepped out of the boat and walked on the water.

And Peter was a man of spiritual insight. When Christ asked the disciples: "Whom say ye that I am?"

Peter was able to answer: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Christ said: "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 16:15-17). And Christ spoke of him as the rock man, and of his having the keys of the Kingdom. Peter was a splendid man, a devoted disciple of Jesus, and if he were living now, everyone would say that he was an advanced Christian. And yet how much there was wanting in Peter!

PETER LIVING THE LIFE OF SELF

You recollect that just after Christ had said to him: "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven," Christ began to speak about His sufferings, and Peter dared to say, "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee." Then Christ had to say: "Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men" (Matthew 16:22-23).

There was Peter in his self-will, trusting his own wisdom, and actually forbidding Christ to go and die. Where did that come from? Peter trusted in himself and his own thoughts about divine things. We see later on, more than once, that the disciples questioned who should be the greatest among them. Peter was one of them, and he thought he had a right to the very first place. He sought his own honor above the others. The life of self was strong in Peter. He had left his boats and his nets, but not his old self.

When Christ had spoken to him about His sufferings, and said: "Get thee behind me, Satan," He followed it up by saying: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). No man can follow Him unless he does that. Self must be utterly denied. What does that mean? When Peter denied Christ, we read that he said three times: "I know Him not" (Luke 22:57). In other words he said, "I have nothing to do with Him; He and I are not friends. I deny having any connection with Him." Christ told Peter that he must deny self. Self must be ignored, and its every claim rejected. That is the root of true discipleship. But Peter did not understand it and could not obey it. And what happened? When the last night came, Christ said to him:

"Before the cock crow twice thou shalt deny me thrice" (Mark 14:30).

But with self-confidence Peter said: "Though all shall be offended, yet will not !. I am ready to go with thee, to prison and to death" (Mark 14:29; Luke 22:33).

Peter meant it honestly, and he really intended to do it; but Peter did not know himself. He did not believe he was as bad as Jesus said he was.

We perhaps think of individual sins that come between us and God. But what are we to do with that sell'-life which is all unclean-our very nature? What are we to do with that flesh that is entirely under the power of sin? Deliverance from that is what we need. Peter knew it not, and therefore it was in selfconfidence that he went forth and denied his Lord.

Notice how Christ uses that word deny twice. He said to Peter the first time, "Deny himself" (Matthew 16:24); He said to Peter the second time, "Thou shalt deny me" (Matthew 26:34). It is either of the two. There is no other choice for us; we must either deny self or deny Christ. There are two great powers fighting each otherthe self-nature in the power of sin, and Christ in the power of God. Either of these must rule within us.

It was self that made the devil. He was an angel of God, but he wanted to exalt self. He became a devil in hell. Self was the cause of the fall of man. Eve wanted something for herself, and so our first parents fell into all the wretchedness of sin. We, their children, have inherited an awful nature of sin.

PETER'S REPENTANCE

Peter denied his Lord three times, and then the Lord looked upon him. That look of Jesus broke Peter's heart. The

terrible sin that he had committed, the terrible failure that had come, and the depth into which he had fallen suddenly opened up before him. Then, "Peter went out and wept bitterly."

Oh! who can tell what that repentance must have been? During the following hours of that night, and the next day-when he saw Christ crucified and buried, and the next day, the Sabbath-oh, what hopeless despair and shame he must have felt!

"My Lord is gone; my hope is gone; and I denied my Lord. After that life of love, after that blessed fellowship of three years, I denied my Lord. God have mercy upon me!"

I do not think we can imagine the depth of humiliation Peter sank into then. But that was the turning point and the change. On the first day of the week, Christ was seen by Peter, and in the evening He met him with the others. Later on at the Sea of Galilee, He asked him: "Lovest thou me?" (John 21:17). Peter was made sad by the thought that the Lord reminded him of having denied Him three times, and said in sorrow, but in uprightness: "Lord, thou knowest. all things; thou knowest that I love thee" (John 21:17).

PETER TRANSFORMED

Now, Peter was prepared for deliverance from self, and that is my last thought. You know Christ took him with the others to the footstool of the throne, and told them to wait there. Then, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came, and Peter was a changed man. I do not want you to think only of the change in Peter, in that boldness, that power, that insight into the Scriptures, and that blessing with which he preached that day. Thank God for that. But there was something deeper and better which happened to Peter. His whole nature was changed. The work that Christ began in Peter when He looked upon him was perfected when he was filled with the Holy Spirit.

If you want to see that, read the first epistle of Peter. You know wherein Peter's failings lay. When he said to Christ, in effect: "Thou never canst suffer; it cannot be"-it showed he did not have a conception of what it was to pass through death into life. Christ said: "Deny thyself," and in spite of that he denied his Lord. When Christ warned him: "Thou shalt deny me" (Matthew 26:34), and he insisted that he never would, Peter showed how little he understood what there was in himself. But when I read his epistle and hear him say: "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you" (I Peter 4:14), then I say that it is not the old Peter, but that it is the very Spirit of Christ breathing and speaking within him.

I read again how he says: "Hereunto were ye called, to suffer, because Christ also suffered" (I Peter 2:21). 1 understand what a change had come over Peter. Instead of denying Christ, he found joy and pleasure in having self denied, crucified, and given up to the death. And therefore, we read in Acts that when he was called before the Council he could boldly say: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29), and that he could return with the other disciples and rejoice that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ's name.

You remember his self-exaltation; but now he has found out that "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price" (I Peter 3:4). Again he tells us to be "subject one to another, and be clothed with humility" (I Peter 5:5).

Dear friend, I implore you, look at Peter utterly changed-the self-pleasing, the self-trusting, the self-seeking Peter, full of sin, continually getting into trouble, foolish and impetuous, now filled with the Spirit and the life of Jesus. Christ had done it for him by the Holy Spirit.

And now, what is the point in my having thus very briefly pointed to the story of Peter? That story must be the history of every believer who is really to be made a blessing by God. That story is a prophecy of what everyone can receive from God in heaven.

Now, let us just glance hurriedly at what these lessons teach us.

The first lesson is this- You may be a very earnest, godly, devoted believer, in whom the power of the flesh is still very strong.

That is a very solemn truth. Peter, before he denied Christ, had cast out devils and had healed the sick. Yet, the flesh had power; and, the flesh had room in him. Oh, beloved, we have to realize that it is because there is so much of that selflife in us that the power of God cannot work in us as mightily as He desires that it should work. Do you realize that the great God is longing to double His blessing, to give tenfold blessing through us? But there is something hindering Him, and that something is a proof of nothing but the self-life. We talk about the pride of Peter, and the impetuosity of Peter, and the self confidence of Peter. It is all rooted in that one word, self Christ had said, "Deny self," and Peter had never understood, and never obeyed. Every failing came out of that.

What a solemn thought, and what an urgent plea for us to cry: Oh God, do show this to us so that none of us may be living the self-life! It has happened to people who have been Christians for years; it has happened to people who have perhaps occupied prominent positions-God found them out and taught them to find out about themselves. They became utterly ashamed and fell broken before God. Oh, the bitter shame and sorrow and pain and agony that came to them, until at last they found that therewas deliverance! Peter went out and wept bitterly. There may be many godly people in whom the power of the flesh still rules.

And then my second lesson is - It is the work of our blessed Lord Jesus to disclose the power of self.

How was it that Peter-the carnal Peter, selfwilled Peter, Peter with the strong self-love-ever became a man of Pentecost and the writer of his epistles? It was because Christ placed him in charge, and Christ watched over him, and Christ taught and blessed him. The warnings that Christ had given him were part of the training. Last of all, there came that look of love. In His suffering, Christ did not for-get him, but turned around and looked upon him, and "Peter went out and wept bitterly." And the Christ who led Peter to Pentecost is waiting today to take charge of every heart that is willing to surrender itself to Him.

Are there not some saying: "Ah! that is the problem with me; it is always the self-life, selfcomfort, self-consciousness, selfpleasing, and self will. How am I to get rid of it?"

My answer is: It is Christ Jesus who can rid you of it. No one else but Christ Jesus can give deliverance from the power of self. And what does He ask you to do? He asks that you should humble yourself before Him.

Absolute Surrender

by Andrew Murray

IMPOSSIBLE WITH MAN, POSSIBLE WITH GOD

"And he said, the things which are impossible with men are possible with God" (Luke 18:27).

Christ had said to the rich young ruler, "Sell all that thou hast ... and come, follow me." The young man went away sorrowful. Christ then turned to the disciples,: and said: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" The disciples, we read, were greatly astonished, and answered: "Who, then, can be saved?" And Christ gave this blessed answer: "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God" (Luke 18:2227).

The text contains two thoughts-that in the question of salvation and of following Christ by a holy life, it is impossible for man to do it. And then alongside that is the thought-- What is impossible with man is possible with God.

These two thoughts mark the two great lessons that man has to learn in the Christian life. It often takes a long time to learn the first lesson-that in the Christian life man can do nothing, that salvation is impossible to man. And often a man learns that, and yet he does not learn the second lesson-what has been impossible to him is possible with God. Blessed is the man who learns both lessons! The learning of them marks stages in the Christian's life.

MAN CANNOT

The one stage is when a man is trying to do his utmost and fails, when a man tries to do better and falls again, when a man tries much more and always fails. And yet, very often he does not even then learn the lesson: With man it is impossible to serve God and Christ. Peter spent three years in Christ's school, and he never learned, it is impossible, until he had denied his Lord, went out, and wept bitterly. Then he learned it.

Just look for a moment at a man who is learning this lesson. At first, he fights against it. Then, he submits to it, but reluctantly and in despair. At last, he accepts it A,llllngly and rejoices in it. At the beginning of the Christian life, the young convert has no conception of this truth. He has been converted; he has the joy of the Lord in his heart; he begins to run the race and fight the battle. He is sure he can conquer, for he is earnest and honest, and God will help him. Yet, somehow, very soon he fails where he did not expect it, and sin gets the better of him. He is disappointed, but he thinks: "I was not cautious enough. I did not make my resolutions strong enough." And again he vows, and again he prays, and yet he fails. He thinks: "Am I not, a redeemed man? Have I not the life of God within me?" And he thinks again: "Yes, and I have Christ to help me. I can live the holy life."

At a later period, he comes to another state of mind. He begins to see such a life is impossible, but he does not accept it. There are multitudes of Christians who come to this point: "I cannot." They then think that God never expected them to do what they cannot do. If you tell them that God does expect it, it is a mystery to them. A good many Christians are living a low life-a life of failure and of sin-instead of rest and victory, because they began to say: "I cannot, it is impossible." And yet they do not understand it fully. So, under the impression, I cannot, they give way to despair. They will do their best, but they never expect to get on very far.

But God leads His children on to a third stage. A man comes to take, it is impossible, in its full truth, and yet at the same time says: "I must do it, and I will do it-it is impossible for man, and yet I must do it." The renewed will begins to exercise its whole power, and in intense longing and prayer begins to cry to God: "Lord, what is the meaning of this? How am I to be freed from the power of sin?"

It is the state of the regenerate man in Romans, chapter seven. There you will find the Christian man trying his very utmost to live a holy life. God's law has been revealed to him as reaching down into the very depth of the desires of the heart. The man can dare to say:

"I delight in the law of God after the inward man. To will what is good is present with me. My heart loves the law of God, and my will has chosen that law."

Can a man like that fail, with his heart full of delight in God's law and with his will determined to do 'What is right? Yes. That is what Romans, chapter seven teaches us. There is something more needed. Not only must I delight in the law of God after the inward man and will what God wills, but I need a divine omnipotence to work it in me. And that is what the apostle Paul teaches in Philippians 2:13: "It is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

Note the contrast. In Romans, chapter seven, the regenerate man says: "To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not" (Romans 7:18). But in Philippians, chapter two, you have a man who has been led on farther. He is a man who understands that when God has worked the renewed will, God will give the power to accomplish what that will desires. Let us receive this as the first great lesson in the spiritual life: "It is impossible for me, my God. Let there be an end of the flesh and all its powers, an end of self, and let it be my glory to be helpless.

Praise God for the divine teaching that makes us helpless!

When you thought of absolute surrender to God, were you not brought to an end of yourself? Did you not feel that you could see how you actually could live as a -nan absolutely surrendered to God every moment of the day-at your table, in your house, in your business, in the midst of trials and temptations? I pray you learn the lesson now. If you felt you could not do it, you are on the right road, if you let yourselves be led. Accept that position, and maintain it before God: "My heart's desire and delight, 0 God, is absolute surrender, but I cannot perform it. It is impossible for me to live that life. it is beyond me." Fall down and learn that when you are utterly helpless, God will come to work in you not only to will, but also to do.

GOD CAN

Now comes the second lesson. "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. "

I said a little while ago that there is many a man who has learned the lesson, it is impossible with men, and then he gives up in helpless despair. He lives a wretched Christian life, without joy or strength or victory. And why? Because he does not humble himself to learn that other lesson: With God all things are possible.

Your Christian life is to be a continuous proof that God works impossibilities. Your Christian life is to be a series of impossibilities made possible and actual by God's almighty power. That is what the Christian needs. He has an almighty God that he worships, and he must learn to understand that he does not need a little of God's power. But,

he needs-with reverence be it said-the whole of God's omnipotence to keep him right, and to live like a Christian.

The whole of Christianity is a work of God's omnipotence. Look at the birth of Christ Jesus. That was a miracle of divine power, and it was said to Mary: "With God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37). It was the omnipotence of God. Look at Christ's resurrection. We are taught that it was according to the exceeding greatness of His mighty power that God raised Christ from the dead.

Every tree must grow on the root from which it springs. An oak tree three hundred years old grows all the time on the one root from which it had its beginning. Christianity had its beginning in the omnipotence of God. In every soul, Christianity must have its continuance in that omnipotence. All the possibilities of the higher Christian life have their origin in a new understanding of Christ's power to work all God's will in us.

I want to call on you now to come and worship an almighty God. Have you learned to do it? Have you learned to deal so closely with an almighty God that you know omnipotence is working in you? In outward appearance there is often little sign of it.

The apostle Paul said: "I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and ... my preaching was ... in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (I Corinthians 2:3,4). From the human side there was feebleness; from the divine side there was divine omnipotence. And that is true of every godly life. If we would only learn that lesson better, and give a wholehearted, undivided surrender to it, we would learn what blessedness there is in dwelling every hour and every moment with an almighty God. Have you ever studied in the Bible the attribute of God's omnipotence? You know that it was God's omnipotence that created the world, and created light out of darkness, and created man. But have you studied God's omnipotence in the works of redemption?

Look at Abraham. When God called him to be the father of that people out of which Christ was to be born, He said to him: "I am the Almighty God, walk before me and be thou perfect" (Genesis 17: 1)'. And God trained Abraham to trust Him as the omnipotent One. Whether it was his going out to a land that he did not know, or his faith as a pilgrim midst the thousands of Canaanites-his faith said: "This is my land." Whetherit was his faith in waiting twenty-five years for a son in his old age, against all hope, or whether it was the raising up of Isaac from the dead on Mount Moriah when he was going to sacrifice him-Abraham believed God. He was strong in faith, giving glory to God, because he accounted Him who had promised able to perform.

The cause of the weakness of your Christian life is that you want to work it out partly, and to let God help you. And that cannot be. You must come to be utterly helpless, to let God work. He will work gloriously. It is this that we need if we are indeed to be workers for God. I could go through Scripture and prove to you how Moses, when he led Israel out of Egypt; how Joshua, when he brought them into the land of Canaan; how all God's servants in the Old Testament counted on the omnipotence of God doing impossibilities. And this God lives today; and this God is the God of every child of His. And yet some of us want God to give us a little help while we do our best, instead of coming to understand what God wants, and to say: "I can do nothing. God must and will do all." Have you said: "In worship, in work, in sanctification, in obedience to God, I can do nothing of myself, and so my place is to worship God, and to believe that He will work in me every moment"? Oh, may God teach us this! Oh, that God would by His grace show you what a God you have, and to what a God you have entrusted yourself-an omnipotent God. He is willing, with His whole omnipotence, to place Himself at the disposal of every child of His! Will we not take the lesson of the Lord Jesus, and say: "Amen; the things which are impossible with men are possible with God"?

Remember what we have said about Peter, his selfconfidence, self-power, self-will, and how he came to deny his Lord. You feel, "Ah! there is the self-life; there is the fleshlife that rules in me!" And now, have you believed that there is deliverance from that? Have you believed that Almighty God is able to reveal Christ in your heart, to let the Holy Spirit rule in you so that the self-life will not have power or dominion over you? Have you coupled the two together- and, with tears of penitence and with deep humiliation and feebleness, cried out: "O God, it is impossible to me; man cannot do it, but glory to Your name, it is possible with God"? Have you claimed deliverance? Do it now. Put yourself afresh in absolute surrender into the hands of a God of infinite love. As infinite as His love is His power to do it.

GOD WORKS IN MAN

But again, we come to the question of absolute surrender, and feel that that is lacking in the Church of Christ. That is why the Holy Spirit cannot fill us, and why we cannot live as people entirely separated unto the Holy Spirit. That is why the flesh and the self-life cannot be conquered. We have never understood what it is to be absolutely surrendered to God as Jesus was. I know that many earnestly and honestly say: "Amen, I accept the message of absolute surrender to God." Yet they think: "Will that ever be mine? Can I count on God to make me one of whom it will be said in heaven, on earth, and in hell, he lives in absolute surrender to God?" Brother, sister, "the things which are impossible with men are possible with God." Do believe that, when He takes charge of you in Christ, it is possible for God to make you a man of absolute surrender. And God is able to maintain that. He is able to let you rise from bed every morning of the week with that blessed thought directly or indirectly: "I am in God's charge. My God is working out my life for me."

Some are weary of thinking about sanctification. You pray; you have longed and cried for it; and yet, it appeared so far off! You are so conscious of how distant the holiness and humility of Jesus is. Beloved friends, the one doctrine of sanctification that is scriptural and real and effectual is: "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." God can sanctify men. By His almighty and sanctifying power, God can keep them every moment. Oh, that we might get a step nearer to our God now! Oh, that the light of God might shine, and that we might know our God better!

I could go on to speak about the life of Christ in us-living like Christ, taking Christ as our Savior from sin, and as our life and strength. It is God in heaven who can reveal that in you. What does that prayer of the apostle Paul say: "That he would grant you according to riches of his glory, to be strength- ened with might by his Spirit in the inner man" (Ephesians 3:16)? Do you not see that it is an omnipotent God working by His omnipotence in the heart of His believing children, so that Christ can become an indwelling Savior? You have tried to grasp it, understand it, and to believe it, and it would not come. It was because you had not been brought to believe that "the things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

And so I trust that the word spoken about love may have brought many to see that we must have an inflowing of love in quite a new way. Our heart must be filled with life from above- from the Fountain of everlasting love-if it is going to overflow all day. Then it will be just as natural for us to love our fellow-men as it is natural for the lamb to be gentle and the wolf to be cruel. When I am brought to such a state that the more a man hates and speaks evil of me--the more unlikable and unlovable a man isthe more I will love him. When I am brought to such a state that the more obstacles, hatred, and ingratitude surround me, the more the power of love can triumph in me. Until I am brought to see these, I am not saying: "It is impossible with men." But if you have been led to say: "This message has spoken to me about a love utterly beyond my power. It is absolutely impossible"-then we can come to God and say: "It is possible with You."

Some are crying to God for a great revival. I can say that this is the unceasing prayer of my heart. Oh, if God would only revive His believing people! I cannot think of the unconverted formalists of the Church or of the infidels and skeptics or of all the wretched and perishing around me, without my heart pleading: "My God, revive Your Church and people." It is not for a lack of reason that thousands of hearts yearn after holiness and consecration. It is a forerunner of God's power. God works to will and then He works to do. These yearnings are a witness and a proof that God has worked to will. Oh, let us in faith believe that the omnipotent God will work to do among His people more than we can ask. "Unto him," Paul said, "that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,. unto him be glory" (Ephesians 3:20,21). Let our hearts say that. Glory to God, the omnipotent One, who can do above what we dare to ask or think!

"The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." All around you there is a world of sin and sorrow, and Satan is there. But remember, Christ is on the throne; Christ is stronger; Christ has conquered; and Christ will conquer. But wait on God. My text casts us down: "The things which are impossible with men", but it ultimately lifts us up high-"are possible with God." Get linked to God. Adore and trust Him as the omnipotent One, not only for your own life, but for all the souls that are entrusted to you. Never pray without adoring His omnipotence, saying: "Mighty God, I claim Your almightiness. " And the answer to the prayer will come. Like Abraham you will become strong in faith, giving glory to God, because you account Him who has promised able to perform.

Absolute Surrender

by Andrew Murray

"0 WRETCHED MAN THAT I AM!"

"0 wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 7:24,25).

You know the wonderful location that this text has in the epistle to the Romans. It stands here at the end of the seventh chapter as the gateway into the eighth. In the first sixteen verses of the eighth chapter, the name of the Holy Spirit is found sixteen times. You have there the description and promise of the life that a child of God can live in the power of the Holy Spirit. This begins in the second verse: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2). From that, Paul goes on to speak of the great privileges of the child of God who is to be led by the Spirit of God. The gateway into all this is found at the end of chapter seven: "0 wretched man that I am!" There you have the words of a man who has come to the end of himself. He has in the previous verses described how he had struggled and wrestled in his own power to obey the holy law of God, and had failed. But in answer to his own questions, he now finds the true answer and cries out: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." From that he goes on to speak of what that deliverance is that he has found.

I want, from these words, to describe the path by which a man can be led out of the spirit of bondage into the spirit of liberty. You know how distinctly it is said: "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear" (Romans 8:15). We are continually warned that this is the great danger of the Christian life, to go again into bondage. I want to describe the path by which a man can get out of bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Rather, I want to describe the man himself.

First, these words are the language of a regenerate man; second, of a weak man; third, of a wretched man; and fourth, of a man on the border of complete liberty.

THE REGENERATE MAN

There is much evidence of regeneration from the fourteenth verse of chapter seven on to the twenty-third verse. "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (Romans 7:17). That is the language of a regenerate man-a man who knows that his heart and nature have been renewed, and that sin is now a power in him that is not himself. "I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (Romans 7:22). That again is the language of a regenerate man. He dares to say when he does evil: "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth me." It is of great importance to understand this,

In the first two great sections of the epistle, Paul deals with justification and sanctification. In dealing with justification, he lays the foundation of the doctrine in the teaching about sin. He does not speak of the singular sin, but of the plural, sins-the actual transgressions. In the second part of the fifth chapter, he begins to deal with sin, not as actual transgression, but as a power. Just imagine what a loss it would have been to us if we did not have this second half of the seventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans-if Paul had omitted in his teaching this vital question of the sinfulness of the believer. We should 'have missed the question we all want answered as to sin in the believer. What is the answer? The regenerate man is one in whom the will has been renewed, and who can

say: "I delight in the law of God after the inward man."

THE WEAK MAN

Here is the great mistake made by many Christian people-they think that when there is a renewed ,will, it is enough. But that is not the case. This regenerate man tells us: "I will to do what is good, but the power to perform I find not." How often people tell us that if you set yourself determinedly, you can perform what you will! But this man was as determined as any man can be, and yet he made the confession: "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not" (Romans 7:18).

But, you ask: "How is it God makes a regenerate man utter such a confession? He being with a right will, with a heart that longs to do good, and longs to do its very utmost to love God?"

Let us look at this question. What has God given us our will for? Had the angels who fell, in their own will, the strength to stand? Surely, no. The will of man is nothing but an empty vessel in which the power of God is to be made manifest. Man must seek in God all that is to be. You have it in the second chapter of the epistle to the Philippians, and you have it here also, that God's work is to work in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Here is a man who appears to say: "God has not worked to do in me." But we are taught that God works both to will and to do. How is the apparent contradiction to be reconciled?

You will find that in this passage (Romans 7:6-25), the name of the Holy Spirit does not occur once, nor does the name of Christ occur. The man is wrestling and struggling to fulfill God's law. Instead of the Holy Spirit and of Christ, the law is mentioned nearly twenty times. In this chapter, it shows a believer doing his very best to obey the law of God with his regenerate will. Not only this; but you will find the little words, I, me, my, occur more than forty times. It is the regenerate I in its weakness seeking to obey the law without being filled with the Spirit. This is the experience of almost every saint. After conversion, a man begins to do his best, and he fails. But if we are brought into the full light, we no longer need to fail. Nor need we fail at all if we have received the Spirit in His fullness at conversion.

God allows that failure so that the regenerate man should be taught his own utter inability. It is in the course of this struggle that the sense of our utter sinfulness comes to us. It is God's way of dealing with us. He allows man to strive to fulfill the law so that, as he strives and wrestles, he may be brought to this: "I am a regenerate child of God, but I am utterly helpless to obey His law." See what strong words are used all through the chapter to describe this condition: "I am carnal, sold under sin" (Romans 7:14); "1 see another law in my members bringing me into captivity" (Romans 7:23); and last of all, "0 wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24). This believer who bows here in deep contrition is utterly unable to obey the law of God.

THE WRETCHED MAN

Not only is the man who makes this confession a regenerate and a weak man, but he is also a wretched man. He is utterly unhappy and miserable. What is it that makes him so utterly miserable? It is because God has given him a nature that loves Himself. He is deeply wretched because he feels he is not obeying his God. He says, with brokenness of heart: "It is not I that do it, but I am under the awful power of sin, which is holding me down. It is 1, and yet not 1: alas! alas! it is myself; so closely am I bound up with it, and so closely is it intertwined with my very nature." Blessed be God when a man learns to say: "0 wretched man that I am!" from the depth of his heart.

He is on the way to the eighth chapter of Romans.

There are many who make this confession a pillow for sin. They say that if Paul had to confess his weakness and helplessness in this way, who are they that they should try to do better? So the call to holiness is quietly set aside. Pray God that every one of us would learn to say these words in the very spirit in which they are written here! When we hear sin spoken of as the abominable thing that God hates, do not many of us wince before the word? If only all Christians who go on sinning and sinning would take this verse to heart. If ever you utter a sharp word say: "0 wretched man that I am!" And every time you lose your temper, kneel down and under stand that God never meant His child to remain in this state. If only we would take this word into our daily life, and say it every time we are touched about our own honor! If only we would take it into our hearts every time we say sharp things, and every time we sin against the Lord God, and against the Lord Jesus Christ in His humility and in His obedience and in His self-sacrifice! Pray God that we could forget everything else, and cry out: "0 wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Why should you say this whenever you commit sin? Because it is when a man is brought to this confession that deliverance is at hand. And remember, it was not only the sense of being weak and taken captive that made him wretched. It was, above all, the sense of sinning against his God. The law was doing its work, making sin exceedingly sinful in his sight. The thought of continually grieving God became utterly unbearable. It was this that brought forth the piercing cry: "0 wretched man!" As long as we talk and reason about our inability and our failure, and only try to find out what Romans, chapter seven, means, it will profit us little. But once every sin gives new intensity to the sense of wretchedness, and we feel our whole state as one of not only helplessness, but actual, exceeding sinfulness, we will be pressed not only to ask: "Who shall deliver us?" but to cry: "I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord."

THE ALMOST-DELIVERED MAN

The man has tried to obey the beautiful law of God. He has loved it; he has wept over his sin; and he has tried to conquer. He has tried to overcome fault after fault, but every time he has ended in failure. What did he mean by "the body of this death"? Did he mean, my body when I die? Surely not. In the eighth chapter, you have the answer to this question in the words: "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:13). That is the body of death from which he is seeking deliverance.

And now he is on the brink of deliverance! In, the twentythird verse of the seventh chapter, we have the words: "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." It is a captive that cries: "0 wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body I of this death?" He is a man who feels himself bound. But look to.the contrast in the second verse of the eighth chapter: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." That is the deliverance through Jesus Christ our Lord, the liberty to the captive which the Spirit brings. Can you keep captive any longer a man made free by the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus"?

But you say, the regenerate man did not have the Spirit of Jesus when he spoke in the sixth chapter. Yes, he did not know what the Holy Spirit could do for him.

God does not work by His Spirit as He works by a blind force in nature. He leads His people on as reasonable, intelligent beings. Therefore, when He wants to give us that Holy Spirit whom He has promised, He first brings us to the end of sel brings us to the conviction that though we have been striving to obey the law, we have failed.

When we have come to the end of that, then He shows us that in the Holy Spirit we have the power of obedience, the power of victory, and the power of real holiness. God works to will, and He is ready to work to do, but many Christians misunderstand this. They think because they have the will, it is enough, and that now they are able to do. This is not so. The new will is a permanent gift, an attribute of the new nature. The power to do is not a permanent gift, but must be received each moment from the Holy Spirit. It is the man who is conscious of his own weakness as a believer who will learn that by the Holy Spirit he can live a holy life. This man is on the brink of that great deliverance; the way has been prepared for the glorious eighth chapter. I now ask this solemn question: Where are you living? With you, is it, "0 wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me? " with now and then a little experience of the power of the Holy Spirit? Or is it, "I thank God through Jesus Christ! The law of the Spirit hath set me free from the law of sin and of death"?

What the Holy Spirit does is to give the victory. "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:13). It is the Holy Spirit who does this-the third Person of the Godhead. It is He who, when the heart is opened wide to receive Him, comes in and reigns there, and mortifies the deeds of the body, day by day, hour by hour, and moment by moment.

I want to bring this to a point. Remember, dear friend, what we need is to come to decision and action. There are in Scripture two very different sorts of Christians. The Bible speaks in Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians about yielding to the flesh; and that is the life of tens of thousands of believers. All their lack of joy in the Holy Spirit, and their lack of the liberty He gives, is just owing to the flesh. The Spirit is within them, but the flesh rules the life. To be led by the Spirit of God is what they need. If only I could make every child of His realize what it means that the everlasting God has given His dear Son, Christ Jesus, to watch over you every day, and that what you have to do is to trust. If only I could make His children understand that the work of the Holy Spirit is to enable you every moment to remember Jesus, and to trust Him! The Spirit has come to keep the link with Him unbroken every moment. Praise God for the Holy Spirit! We are so accustomed to thinking of the Holy Spirit as a luxury, for special times, or for special ministers and men. But the Holy Spirit is necessary for every believer, every moment of the day. Praise God you have Him, and that He gives you the full experience of the deliverance in Christ as He makes you free from the power of sin.

Who longs to have the power and the liberty of the Holy Spirit? Oh, brother, bow before God in one final cry of despair: "0 God, must I go on sinning this way forever? Who shall deliver me, 0 wretched man that I am! from the body of this death?"

Are you ready to sink before God in that cry and seek the power of Jesus to live and work in you? Are you ready to say: "I thank God through Jesus Christ"?

What good does it do that we go to church or attend conventions, 'that we study our Bibles and pray, unless our lives are filled with the Holy Spirit? That is what God wants. Nothing else will enable us to live a life of power and peace. When a minister or parent is using the catechism, and a question is asked, an answer is expected. How sad that many Christians are content with the question put here: "0 wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" but never give the answer.

Instead of answering, they are silent. Instead of saying: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," they are forever repeating the question without the answer. If you want the path to the full deliverance of Christ, and the liberty of the Spirit-the glorious liberty of the children of God-take it through the seventh chapter of Romans. Then say: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Do not be content to remain ever groaning, but say: "I, a wretched man, thank God, through Jesus Christ. Even though I do not see it all, I am going to praise God. "

There is deliverance; there is the liberty of the Holy Spirit. The Kingdom of God is "joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17).

Absolute Surrender

by Andrew Murray

"HAVING BEGUN IN THE SPIRIT"

The words from which I wish to address you, you will find in the epistle to the Galatians, the third chapter, the second and third verses: "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Are ye so foolish?" And then comes my text-"Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"

When we speak of the quickening or the deepening or the strengthening of the spiritual life, we are thinking of something that is feeble and wrong and sinful. It is a great thing to take our place before God with the confession: "Oh, God, our spiritual life is not what it should be!" May God work that in your heart, reader.

As we look around at the Church, we see so many indications of feebleness, failure, sin, and shortcoming. They compel us to ask: Why is it? Is there any necessity for the Church of Christ to be living in such a low state? Or is it actually possible that God's people should be living always in the joy and strength of their God?

Every believing heart must answer: It is possible.

Then comes the great question: Why is it, how is it to be accounted for, that God's Church as a whole is so feeble, and that the great majority of Christians are not living up to their privileges? There must be a reason for it. Has God not given Christ His Almighty Son to be the Keeper of every believer, to make Christ an ever-present reality, and to impart and communicate to us all that we have in Christ? God has given His Son, and God has given His Spirit. How is it that believers do not live up to their privileges?

In more than one of the epistles, we find a very solemn answer to that question. There are epistles, such as the first to the Thessalonians, where Paul writes to the Christians, in effect: "I want you to grow, to abound, to increase more and more." They were young, and there were things lacking in their faith. But their state was so far satisfactory, gave him such great joy, that he writes time after time: "I pray God that you may abound more and more; I write to you to increase more and more" (I Thessalonians 4: 1,10). But there are other epistles where he takes a very different tone, especially the epistle to the Corinthians and to the Galatians, and he tells them in many different ways what the one reason was that they were .not living as Christians ought to live. Many were under the power of the flesh. My text is one example. He reminds them that by the preaching of faith they had received the Holy Spirit. He had preached Christ to them; they had accepted that Christ and had received the Holy Spirit in power.

But what happened? Having begun in the Spirit, they tried to perfect the work that the Spirit had begun in the flesh by their own effort. We find the same teaching in the epistle to the Corinthians.

Now, we have here a solemn discovery of what the great need is in the Church of Christ. God has called the Church of Christ to live in the power of the Holy Spirit. But the Church is living, .for the most part, in the power of human flesh, and of will and energy and effort apart from the Spirit of God. I do not doubt that this is the case with many individual believers. And oh, if God will use me to give you a message from Him, my one message

will be this: "If the Church will return to acknowledge that the Holy Spirit is her strength and her help, and if the Church will return to give up everything, and wait on God to be filled with the Spirit, her days of beauty and gladness will return. We will see the glory of God revealed among us." This is my message to every individual believer: "Nothing will help you unless you come to understand that you must live every day under the power of the Holy Spirit." God wants you to be a living vessel in whom the power of the Spirit is to be manifested every hour and every moment of your life. God will enable you to be that.

Now, let us try to learn what this word to the Galatians teaches us-some very simple thoughts. It shows us how (1) the beginning of the Christian life is receiving the Holy Spirit. It shows us (2) what great danger there is of forgetting that we are to live know what it is, since that time, to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. Let us try to take hold of this great truth: The beginning of the true Christian life is to receive the Holy Spirit. And the work of every Christian minister is that which was the work of Paul-to remind his people that they received the Holy Spirit, and must live according to His guidance and in His power.

If those Galatians who received the Holy Spirit in power were tempted to go astray by that terrible danger of perfecting in the flesh what had been begun in the Spirit, how much more danger do those Christians run who hardly ever know that they have received the Holy Spirit. How much more danger is there for those who, if they know it as a matter of belief, hardly ever think of the gift of the Holy Spirit, and hardly ever praise God for it!

NEGLECTING THE HOLY SPIRIT

But now look, in the second place, at the great danger.

You may all know what shunting is on a railway. A locomotive with its train may be traveling in a certain direction, and the points at some place may not be properly opened or closed, and unobservingly it is shunted off to the right or to the left. And if that takes place, for instance, on a dark night, the train goes in the wrong direction, and the people might never know it until they have gone some distance.

And just so, God gives Christians the Holy Spirit with this intention-that every day, all their life, should be lived in the power of the Spirit. A man cannot live one hour of a godly life unless by the power of the Holy Spirit. He may live a proper, consistent life, as people call it, an irreproachable life, a life of virtue and diligent service. But to live a life acceptable to God, in the enjoyment of God's salvation and God's love, to live and walk in the power of the new life-he cannot do it unless he is guided by the Holy Spirit every day and every hour.

But now listen to the danger. The Galatians received the Holy Spirit, but what was begun by the Spirit they tried to perfect in the flesh. How? They fell back again under Judaizing teachers who told them they must be circumcised. They began to seek their religion in external observances. And so Paul uses that expression about those teachers who had them circumcised so "that they may glorify in your flesh" (Galatians 6:13).

You sometimes hear the expression used, religious flesh. What is meant by that? It is simply an expression made to give utterance to these thoughts: My human nature and my human will and my human effort can be very active in religion. After being converted, and after receiving the Holy Spirit, I may begin in my own strength to try to serve God.

I may be very diligent and doing a great deal, and yet all the time it is more the work of human flesh than of God's Spirit. What a solemn thought, that man can, without noticing, be shunted off from the line of the Holy Spirit onto

the line of the flesh.

How solemn it is that man can be most diligent and make great sacrifices, and yet it is all in the power of the human will! Ah, the great question for us to ask of God in self-examination is that we may be shown whether our Christian life is lived more in the power of the flesh than in the power of the Holy Spirit. A man may be a preacher, he may work most diligently in his ministry, a man may be a Christian worker, and others may say of him that he makes great sacrifices, and yet you can feel there is something lacking. You feel that he is not a spiritual man; there is no spirituality about his life. How many Christians there are about whom no one would ever think of saying: "What a spiritual man he is!" Ah! there is the weakness of the Church of Christ. It is all in that one word-flesh.

Now, the flesh may manifest itself in many ways. It may be manifested in fleshly wisdom. My mind may be most active about Christianity. I may preach or write or think or meditate, and delight in being occupied with things in God's Book and in God's Kingdom. Yet, the power of the Holy Spirit may be markedly absent. I fear that if you take the preaching throughout the Church of Christ and ask why there is so little converting power in the preaching of the Word, why there is so much work and often so little result for eternity, why the Word has so little power to build up believers in holiness and in consecration-the answer will be: It is the absence of the power of the Holy Spirit. And why is this? There can be no other reason except that the flesh and human energy have taken the place that the Holy Spirit ought to have. That was true of the Galatians; it was true of the Corinthians. You know Paul said to them: "I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual men, but as unto carnal" (1 Corinthians 3:1). And you know how often in the course of his epistle he had to reprove and condemn them for strife and for divisions.

LACKING THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A third thought: What are the proofs or indications that a church like the Galatians, or a Christian, is serving God in the power of the flesh-is perfecting in the flesh what was begun in the Spirit? The answer is very easy. Religious self effort always ends in sinful flesh. What was the state of those Galatians? They were striving to be justified by the works of the law. And yet they were quarreling and in danger of devouring one another. Count the number of expressions that the apostle uses to indicate their want of love. You will find more than twelve-envy, jealousy, bitterness, strife, and all sorts of others. Read in the fourth and fifth chapters what he says about that. You see how they tried to serve God in their own-.strength, and they failed utterly. All this religious effort resulted in failure. The power of sin and the sinful flesh got the better of them. Their whole condition was one of the saddest that could be thought of.

This comes to us with unspeakable solemnity.

There is a complaint everywhere in the Christian Church of the lack of a high standard of integrity and godliness, even among the professing members of Christian churches. I remember a sermon which I heard preached on commercial morality. But let us not speak only of the commercial morality or immorality; let us go into the homes of Christians. Think of the life to which God has called His children, and which He enables them to live by the Holy Spirit. Think of how much there is of unlovingness, temper, sharpness, and bitterness. Think how often there is strife among the members of churches, and how much there is of envy, jealousy, sensitiveness, and pride. Then we are compelled to say: "Where are marks of the presence of the Spirit of the Lamb of God?" Wanting, sadly wanting!

Many people speak of these things as though they were the natural result of our feebleness and cannot be helped. Many people speak of these things as sins, yet have given up the hope of conquering them. Many people speak of these things in the church around them, and do not see the least prospect of ever having the things changed. There is no prospect until there is a radical change, until the Church of God begins to see that every sin in the believer comes from the flesh-from a fleshly life midst our Christian activities, from a striving in self-effort to serve God. We will fail until we learn to make confession, and until we begin to see that we must somehow or other get God's Spirit in power back to His Church. Where did the Church begin in Pentecost? There they began in the Spirit. But, how the Church of the next century went off into the flesh! They thought to perfect the Church in the flesh.

Do not let us think, because the blessed Reformation restored the great doctrine of justification by faith, that the power of the Holy Spirit was then fully restored. If it is our belief that God is going to have mercy on His Church in these last ages, it will be because the doctrine and the truth about the Holy Spirit will not only be studied, but sought after with a whole heart. It is not only because that truth will be sought after, but because ministers and congregations will be found bowing before God in deep abasement with one cry: "We have grieved God's Spirit. We have tried to be Christian churches with as little as possible of God's Spirit. We have not sought to be churches filled with the Holy Spirit."

All the feebleness in the Church is owing to the refusal of the Church to obey its God. And why is that so? I know your answer. You say: "We are too feeble and too helpless, and we vow to obey, but somehow we fail." Ah yes, you fail because you do not accept the strength of God. God alone can work out His will in you. You cannot work out God's will, but His Holy Spirit can. Until the Church and the believers grasp this, and cease trying by human effort to do God's will, and wait upon the Holy Spirit to come with all His omnipotent and enabling power, the Church will never be what God wants her to be. It will never be what God is willing to make of her.

YIELDING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

I come now to my last thought, that question: What is the way to restoration?

Beloved friend, the answer is simple and easy. If that train has been shunted off, there is nothing for it to do but to come back to the point at which it was led away. The Galatians had no other way in returning but to come back to where they had gone wrong. They had to come back from all religious effort in their own strength, and from seeking anything by their own work, and to yield themselves humbly to the Holy Spirit. There is no other way for us as individuals.

Is there any brother or sister whose heart is conscious: "My life knows little of the power of the Holy Spirit"? I come to you with God's message that you can have no conception of what your life would be in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is too high, too blessed, and too wonderful. But I bring you the message that just as truly as the everlasting Son of God came to this world and did His wonderful works, that just as truly as on Calvary He died and brought about your redemption by His precious blood, so can the Holy Spirit come into your heart. With His divine power, He may sanctify you and enable you to do God's blessed will, and fill your heart with joy and strength. But, we have forgotten; we have grieved; we have dishonored the Holy Spirit; and, He has not been able to do His work. But I bring you the message: The Father in heaven loves to fill His children with His Holy Spirit. God longs to give each one individually, separately, the power of the Holy Spirit for daily life. The command comes to us individually, unitedly. God wants us as His children to arise and place our sins before Him, and to call on Him for mercy. Oh, are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you perfecting in the flesh that

which was begun in the Spirit? Let us bow in shame, and confess before God how our fleshly religion, our self-effort and self-confidence, have been the cause of every failure.

I have often been asked by young Christians: "Why is it that I fail so? I did so solemnly vow with my whole heart, and did desire to serve God. Why have I failed?" To such I always give this answer: "My dear friend, you are trying to do in your own strength what Christ alone can do in you." And when they tell me: "I am sure I knew Christ alone could do it; I was not trusting in myself," my answer is: "You were trusting in yourself, or you could not have failed. If you had trusted Christ, He could not fail." Oh, this perfecting in the flesh what was begun in the Spirit runs far deeper through us than we know. Let us ask God to show us that it is only when we are brought to utter shame and emptiness that we will be prepared to receive the blessing that comes from on high.

And so I come with these two questions. Are you living, beloved brother-minister-I ask it of every minister of the Gospel-under the power of the Holy Spirit? Are you living as an anointed, Spirit-filled man in your ministry and your life before God? Oh friends, our place is an awful one. We have to show people what God will do for us, not in our words and teaching, but in our life. God help us to do it!

I ask it of every member of Christ's Church and of every believer: Are you living a life under the power of the Holy Spirit day by day? Or are you attempting to live without that? Remember, you cannot. Are you consecrated, given up to the Spirit to work in you and to live in you? Oh, come and confess every failure of temper, every failure of tongue however small. Confess every failure owing to the absence of the Holy Spirit and the presence of the power of self. Are you consecrated, are you given up to the Holy Spirit?

If your answer is no, then I come with a second question-Are you willing to be consecrated? Are you willing to give yourself up to the power of the Holy Spirit? You well know that the human side of consecration will not help you. I may consecrate myself a hundred times with all the intensity of my being, and that will not help me. What will help me is this-that God from heaven accepts and seals the consecration.

And now are you willing to give yourselves up to the Holy Spirit? You can do it now. A great deal may still be dark and dim, and beyond what we understand. You may feel nothing; but come. God alone can work the change. God alone, who gave us the Holy Spirit, can restore the Holy Spirit in power into our life. God alone can "strengthen us with might by his Spirit in the inner man" (Ephesians 3:16). And to every waiting heart that will make the sacrifice, and give up everything, and give time to cry and pray to God, the answer will come. The blessing is not far off. Our God delights in helping us. He will enable us to perfect, not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, what was begun in the Spirit.

Absolute Surrender

by Andrew Murray

KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD

The words from which I speak, you will find in 1 Peter, chapter one, verse five. The third, fourth, and fifth verses are: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which ...hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible . . . reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." The words of my text are: "Kept by the power of God through faith."

There we have two wonderful, blessed truths about the way a believer is kept unto salvation. One truth is, Kept by the power of God; and the other truth is, Kept through faith. We should look at the two sides-at God's side and His almighty power, offered to us to be our Keeper every moment of the day; and at the human side, we have nothing to do but in faith to let God do His keeping work. We are begotten again to an inheritance kept in heaven for us. We are kept here on earth by the power of God.

We see there is a double keeping-the inheritance kept for me in heaven, and I on earth kept for the inheritance there. Now, as to the first part of this -keeping, there is no doubt and no question. God keeps the inheritance in heaven very wonderfully and perfectly, and it is waiting there safely. And the same God keeps me for the inheritance. That is what I want to understand. It is very foolish for a father to take great trouble to have an inheritance for his children, and to keep it for them, if he does not keep them for it. Think of a man spending all of his time and making every sacrifice to amass money, and as he gets his tens of thousands, you ask him why it is that he sacrifices himself so. His answer is: "I want to leave my children a large inheritance, and I am keeping it for them." If you were then to hear that that man takes no trouble to educate his children, that he, allows them to run around the street wild, and to go in paths of sin and ignorance and folly, what would you think of him? Would you not say: "Poor man! he is keeping an inheritance for his children, but he is not keeping or preparing his children for the inheritance!" And there are so many Christians who think: "My God is keeping the inheritance for me." But they cannot believe: "My God is keeping me for that inheritance." The same power, the same love, the same God doing the double work.

Now, I want to speak about a work God does upon us, keeping us for the inheritance. I have already said that we have two very simple truths: the one, the divine side-we are kept by the power of God; the other, the human side-we are kept through faith.

KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD

Look at the divine side: Christians are kept by the power of God. 1) Keeping Includes All. Think, first of all, that this keeping is all inclusive.

What is kept? You are kept. How much of you? The whole being. Does God keep one part of you and not another? No. Some people have an idea that this is a sort of vague, general keeping, and that God will keep them in such a way that when they die they will get to heaven. But they do not apply that word kept to everything in their being and nature. And yet that is what God wants.

Here I have a watch. Suppose that this watch had been borrowed from a friend, and he said to me: "When you go to Europe, I will let you take it with you, but mind you keep it safely and bring it back." And suppose I damage the watch, and had the hands broken, and the face defaced, and some of the wheels and springs spoiled, and took it back in that condition, and handed it to my friend. He would say: "Ah, but I gave you that watch on condition that you would keep it."

"Have I not kept it? There is the watch."

"But I did not want you to keep it in that general way, so that you should bring me back only the shell of the watch, or the remains. I expected you to keep every part of it." And so God does not want to keep us in this general way, so that at the last, somehow or other, we will be saved as by fire, and just get into heaven. But the keeping power and the love of God applies to every part of our being.

There are some people who think God will keep them in spiritual things, but not in temporal things. This latter, they say, lies outside of His realm. Now, God sends you to work in the world, but He did not say: "I must now leave you to go and earn your own money, and to get your livelihood for yourself." He knows you are not able to keep yourself. But God says: "My child, there is no work you are to do, and no business in which you are engaged, and not a cent which you are to spend, but I, your Father, will take that up into my keeping." God not only cares for the spiritual, but for the temporal, also. The greater part of the life of many people must be spent, sometimes eight or nine or ten hours a day, amid the temptations and distractions of business. But God will care for you there. The keeping of God includes all.

There are other people who think: "Ah! in time of trial God keeps me. But in times of prosperity I do not need. His keeping; then I forget Him and let Him go." Others, again, think the very opposite. They think: "In time of prosperity, when things are smooth and quiet, I am able to cling to God. But when heavy trials come, somehow or other my will rebels, and God does not keep me then."

Now, I bring you the message that in prosperity as in adversity, in the sunshine as in the dark, your God is ready to keep you all the time. Then again, there are others who think of this keeping thus: "God will keep me from doing very great wickedness, but there are small sins I cannot expect God to keep me from. There is the sin of temper. I cannot expect God to conquer that."

When you hear of some man who has been tempted and gone astray or fallen into drunkenness or murder, you thank God for His keeping power. "I might have done the same as that man," you say, "if God had not kept me." And you believe He kept you from drunkenness and murder. And why do you not believe that God can keep you from outbreaks of temper? You thought that this was of less importance. You did not remember that the great commandment of the New Testament is-"Love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34). And when your temper and hasty judgment and sharp words came out, you sinned against the highest law-the law of God's love. And yet you say: "God will not, God cannot"-no, you will not say, God cannot; but you say, "God does not keep me from that." You perhaps say: "He can; but there is something in me that cannot attain to it, and which God does not take away."

I want to ask you, Can believers live a holier life than is generally lived? Can believers experience the keeping power of God all day, to keep them from sin? Can believers be kept in fellowship with God? And I bring you a message from the Word of God, in these words: Kept by the power of God. There is no qualifying clause to them. The meaning is, that if you will entrust yourself entirely and absolutely to the omnipotence of God, He will

delight in keeping you.

Some people think that they can never reach the point that every word of their mouth would be to the glory of God. But it is what God wants of them; it is what God expects of them. God is willing to set a watch at the door of their mouth. If God will do that, can He not keep their tongue and their lips? He can. That is what God is going to do for those who trust Him. God's keeping is all-inclusive. Let everyone who longs to live a holy life think about all their needs, their weaknesses, their shortcomings, and their sins, and say deliberately: "Is there any sin that my God cannot keep me from?" And the heart will have to answer: "No, God can keep me from every sin."

2) Keeping Requires Power. Second, if you want to understand this keeping, remember that it is not only an all-inclusive keeping, but it is an almighty keeping.

I want to get that truth burned into my soul. I want to worship God until my whole heart is filled with the thought of His omnipotence. God is almighty, and the Almighty God offers Himself to work in my heart-to do the work of keeping me. I want to get linked .with omnipotence, or rather, linked to the omnipotent One--the living God-and to have my place in the hollow of His hand. You read the Psalms, and you think of the wonderful thoughts in many of the expressions that David uses. For instance, when he speaks about being our God, our Fortress, our Refuge, our strong Tower, our Strength, and our Salvation. David had wonderful views of how the everlasting God is Himself the hiding place of the believing soul. David had a beautiful understanding of how God takes the believer and keeps him in the very hollow of His hand-in the secret of His pavilion-under the shadow of His wings, under His very feathers. And there David lived. And we, who are the children of Pentecost, who have known Christ, His blood, and the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, why is it that we know so little of what it is to walk step by step with the Almighty God as our Keeper?

Have you ever thought that, in every action of grace in your heart, you have the whole omnipotence of God engaged to bless you? When I come to a man and he gives me a gift of money; I get it and go away with it. He has given me something of his. The rest he keeps for himself. But that is not the way with the power of God. God can part with nothing of His own power, and therefore I can experience the power and goodness of God only so far as I am in contact and fellowship with Him. And when I come into contact and fellowship with Him, I come into contact and fellowship with the whole omnipotence of God. I have the omnipotence of God to help me every day.

A son has, perhaps, a very rich father, and as the former is about to commence business the father says: "You can have as much money as you want for your undertaking." All the father has is at the disposal of the son. And that is the way with God, your Almighty God. You can hardly take it in; you feel like such a little worm. His omnipotence is needed to keep a little worm! Yes, His omnipotence is needed to keep every little worm that lives in the dust, and also to keep the universe. Therefore, His omnipotence is much more needed in keeping your soul and mine from the power of sin.

Oh, if you want to grow in grace, do learn to begin here. In all your judgings and meditations and thoughts and deeds and questions and studies and prayers, learn to be kept by your Almighty God. What is the Almighty God not going to do for the child that trusts Him? The Bible says: "Above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20). It is omnipotence you must learn to know and trust. Then you will live as a Christian ought to live. How little we have learned to study God, and to understand that a godly life is a life full of God. It is a life that loves God and waits on Him, trusts Him, and allows Him to bless it! We cannot do the will of God except by the power of God. God gives us the first experience of His power to prepare us to long for more, and to come and claim all that He can do. God helps us to trust Him every day.

3) Keeping Is Continuous

Another thought. This keeping is not only all inclusive and omnipotent, but also continuous and unbroken.

People sometimes say: "For a week or a month God has kept me very wonderfully. I have lived in the light of His countenance, and I can say what joy I have had in fellowship with Him. He has blessed me in my work for others. He has given me souls, and at times I felt as if I were carried heavenward on eagle wings. But it did not continue. It was too good; it could not last." And some say: "It was necessary that I should fall to keep me humble." And others say: "I know it was my own fault; but somehow you cannot always live up in the heights." Oh, beloved, why is it? Can there be any reason why the keeping of God should not be continuous and unbroken? Just think. All life is in unbroken continuity. If my life were stopped for half an hour, I would be dead, and my life gone. Life is a continuous thing, and the life of God is the life of His Church. The life of God is His almighty power working in us. And God comes to us as the Almighty One, and without any condition He offers to be my Keeper. His keeping means that day by day, moment by moment, God is going to keep us.

If I were to ask you the question: "Do you think God is able to keep you one day from actual transgression?" you would answer: "I not only know He is able to do it, but I think He has done it. There have been days in which He has kept my heart in His holy presence. There have also been days when, though I have always had a sinful nature within me, He has kept me from conscious, actual transgression."

Now, if He can do that for an hour or a day, why not for two days? Oh! let us make God's omnipotence as revealed in His Word the measure of our expectations. Has God not said in His Word: "I, the Lord, do keep it, and will water it every moment" (Isaiah 27:3)? What can that mean? Does "every moment" mean every moment? Did God promise of that vineyard or red wine that every moment He would water it so that the heat of the sun and the scorching wind might never dry it up? Yes. In South Africa, they sometimes make a graft, and above it they tie a bottle of water, so that now and then there will be a drop to saturate what they have put about it. And so the moisture is kept there unceasingly until the, graft has had time to take, and resist the heat of the sun.

Will our God, in His tenderhearted love toward us, not keep us every moment when He has promised to do so? Oh! if we once got hold of the thought: Our whole spiritual life is to be God's doing-"It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). Once we get faith to expect that from God, God will do all for us.

The keeping is to be continuous. Every morning, God will meet you as you wake. It is not a question: If I forget to wake in the morning with the thought of Him, what will come of it? If you trust your waking to God, God will meet you in the mornings as you wake with His divine sunshine and life. He will give you the consciousness that through the day you have got God to continually take charge of you with His almighty power. And God will meet you the next day and every day. Never mind if, in the practice of fellowship, failure sometimes comes. If you maintain your position-and say: "Lord, I am going to expect You to do Your utmost, and I am going to trust You day by day to keep me absolutely," your faith will grow stronger and stronger. You will know the keeping power of God in unbrokenness.

KEPT THROUGH FAITH

And now the other side-Believing. "Kept by the power of God through faith." How must we look at this faith?

4) Faith Implies Helplessness

Let me say, first of all, that this faith means utter inability and helplessness before God.

At the bottom of all faith there is a feeling of helplessness. If I have a bit of business to transact, perhaps to buy a house, the lawyer must do the work of getting the transfer of the property in my name. He must make all the arrangements. I cannot do that work, and, in trusting that agent, I confess I cannot do it. And so faith always means helplessness. In many cases it means: I can do it with a great deal of trouble, but another can do it better. But in most cases it is utter helplessness: another must do it for me. And that is the secret of the spiritual life. A man must learn to say: "I give up everything. I have tried and longed and thought and prayed, but failure has come. God has blessed me and helped me, but still, in the long run, there has been so much sin and sadness." What a change comes when a man is thus broken down into utter helplessness and selfdespair, and says, "I can do nothing!"

Remember Paul. He was living a blessed life, and he had been taken up into the third heaven. Then the thorn in the flesh came, "a messenger of Satan to buffet me" (2 Corinthians 12:7). And what happened? Paul could not understand it, and three times he prayed to the Lord to take it away. But the Lord said, in effect: "No, it is possible that you might exalt yourself. Therefore, I have sent you this trial to keep you weak and humble." And Paul then learned a lesson that he never forgot-to rejoice in his infirmities. He said that the weaker he was the better it was for him. For when he was weak, he was strong in his Lord Christ.

Do you want to enter what people call "the higher life"? Then go a step lower down. I remember Dr. Boardman telling how once he was invited by a gentleman to go to a factory where they made fine shot. I believe the workmen did so by pouring down molten lead from a great height. This gentleman wanted to take Dr. Boardman up to the top of the tower to see how the work was done. The doctor came to the tower, he entered by the door, and began going upstairs. But when he had gone a few steps, the gentleman called out: "That is the wrong way. You must come down this way. That stair is locked up." The gentleman took him downstairs a good many steps, and there an elevator was ready to take him to the top. He said: "I have learned a lesson that going down is often the best way to get up."

Ah, yes, God will have to bring us down very low. A sense of emptiness and despair and nothingness will have to come upon us. It is when we sink down in utter helplessness that the everlasting God will reveal Himself in His power. Then our hearts will learn to trust God alone.

What is it that keeps us from trusting Him perfectly?

Many say: "I believe what you say, but there is one difficulty. If my trust were perfect and always abiding, all would come right, for I know God will honor trust. But how am I to get that trust?"

My answer is: "By the death of self. The great hindrance to trust is self-effort. So long as you have got your own wisdom and thoughts and strength, You cannot fully trust God. But when God breaks you down, when everything begins to grow dim before your eyes and you see that you understand nothing, then God is coming near. If you will bow down in nothingness and wait on God, He will become all."

As long as we are something, God cannot be all. His omnipotence cannot do its full work. That is the beginning

of faith-utter despair of self, a ceasing from man and everything on earth and finding our hope in God alone.

5) Faith Is Rest

And then, next, we must understand that faith is rest.

In the beginning of the faith-life, faith is struggling. But as long as faith is struggling, faith has not attained its strength. But when faith in its struggling gets to the end of itself, and throws itself upon God and rests on Him, then joy and victory come.

Perhaps I can make it plainer if I tell the story of how the Keswick Convention began. Canon Battersby was an evangelical clergyman of the Church of England for more than twenty years. He was a man of deep and tender godliness, but he did not have the consciousness of rest and victory over sin. He was often deeply saddened by the thought of stumbling and failure and sin. When he heard about the possibility of victory, he felt it was desirable, but it was as if he could not attain it. On one occasion, he heard an address on "Rest and Faith" from the story of the nobleman who came from Capernaum to Cana to ask Christ to heal his child. In the address, it was shown that the nobleman believed that Christ could help him in a general way. But he came to Jesus a good deal by way of an experiment. He hoped Christ would help him, but he did not have any assurance of that help. But what happened? When Christ said to him: "Go thy way, for thy child liveth" (John 4:50), that man believed the word that Jesus spoke. He rested in that word. He had no proof that his child was well again, and he had to walk back seven hours' journey to Capernaum. He walked back, and on the way met his servant, and got the first news that the child was well.The servant told him that at one o'clock on the afternoon of the previous day, at the very time that Jesus spoke to him, the fever left the child. That father rested on the word of Jesus and His work, and he went down to Capernaum and found his child well. He praised God, and he and his whole house became believers and disciples of Jesus. Oh, friends, that is faith! When God comes to me with the promise of His keeping, and I have nothing on earth to trust in, I say to God: "Your word is enough. I am kept by the power of God." That is faith, that is rest. When Canon Battersby heard that address, he went home that night, and in the darkness of the night he found rest. He rested on the word of Jesus. And the next morning, in the streets of Oxford, he said to a friend: "I have found it!" Then he went and told others, and asked that the Keswick Convention might commence. He said that those at the convention, along with himself, should simply testify what God had done.

It is a great thing when a man comes to rest on God's almighty power for every moment of his life. It is also great when he does so in the midst of temptations to temper and haste and anger and unlovingness and pride and sin. It is a great thing in the face of these to enter into a covenant with the omnipotent Jehovah--not on account of anything that any man says, or of anything that my heart feels-but on the strength of the Word of God: "Kept by the power of God through faith."

Oh, let us say to God that we are going to prove Him to the very utmost. Let us say: We ask You for nothing more than You can give, but we want nothing less. Let us say: My God, let my life be a proof of what the omnipotent God can do. Let these be the two dispositions of our souls every day-deep helplessness, and simple, childlike rest.

6) Faith Needs Fellowship

That brings me to just one more thought in regard to faith. Faith implies fellowship with God.

Many people want to take the Word and believe that, but do not think it is so necessary to fellowship with God.

Ah, no! you cannot separate God from His Word. No goodness or power can be received separate from God. If you want to get into this life of godliness, you must take time for fellowship with God. People sometimes tell me: "My life is one of such scurry and bustle that I have no time for fellowship with God." A dear missionary said to me: "People do not know how we missionaries are tempted. I get up at five o'clock in the morning, and there are the natives waiting for their orders for work. Then, I have to go to the school and spend hours there. Then, there is other work, and sixteen hours rush along. I hardly get time to be alone with God."

Ah! there is the need. I pray you, remember two things. I have not told you to trust the omnipotence of God as a thing, and I have not told you to trust the Word of God as a written book. I have told you to go to the God of ornnipotence andthe God of the Word. Deal with God as that nobleman dealt with the living Christ. Why was he able to believe the word that Christ spoke to him? Because in the very eyes and tone and voice of Jesus, the Son of God, he saw and heard something which made him feel that he could trust Him. And that is what Christ can do for you and me. Do not try to stir and arouse faith from within. How often I have tried to do that, and made a fool of myself! You cannot stir up faith from the depths of your heart. Leave your heart, and look into the face of Christ. Listen to what He tells you about how He will keep you. Look up into the face of your loving Father, and take time every day with Him. Begin a new life with the deep emptiness and poverty of a man who has got nothing, and who wants to get everything from Him-with the deep restfulness of a man who rests on the living God, the omnipotent Jehovah. Try God, and prove Him if He will not open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing that there will not be room to receive it.

I close by asking if you are willing to fully experience the heavenly keeping for the heavenly inheritance? Robert Murray M'Cheyne says, somewhere: "Oh, God, make me as holy as a pardoned sinner can be made." And if that prayer is in your heart, come now, and let us enter into a covenant with the everlasting and omnipotent Jehovah afresh. In great helplessness, but in great restfulness, let us place ourselves in His hands. And then, as we enter into our covenant, let us have the one prayer--that we may fully believe that the everlasting God is going to be our companion. Let us believe that He will hold our hand every moment of the day. He is our Keeper, watching over us without a moment's interval. He is our Father, delighting to reveal Himself in our souls always. He has the power to let the sunshine of His love be with us all day. Do not be afraid that because you have your business you cannot have God with you always. Learn the lesson that the natural sun shines on you all day, and you enjoy its light. Wherever you are you have got the sun; God makes certain that it shines on you. And God will make certain that His own divine light shines on you, and that you will abide in that light, if you will only trust Him for it. Let us trust God to do that with a great and entire trust. Here is the omnipotence of God, and here is faith reaching out to the measure of that omnipotence. We can say: "All that that omnipotence can do, I am going to trust my God for." Are not the two sides of this heavenly life wonderful? God's omnipotence covers me, and my will in its littleness rests in that omnipotence, and rejoices in it!

Moment by moment, I'm kept in His love;
Moment by moment, I've life from above;
Looking to Jesus, the glory doth shine;
Moment by moment, Oh, Lord, I am thine!

Absolute Surrender

by Andrew Murray

"YE ARE THE BRANCHES"

AN ADDRESS TO CHRISTIAN WORKERS

Everything depends on our being right in Christ. If I want good apples, I must have a good apple tree. If I care for the health of the apple tree, the apple tree will give me good apples. And it is just so with our Christian life and work. If our life with Christ is right, all will come out right. Instruction and suggestion and help and training in the different departments of the work may be needed; all that has value. But in the long run, the greatest essential is to have the full life in Christ-in other words, to have Christ in us, working through us. I know how much there is to disturb us, or to cause anxious questionings. But the Master has such a blessing for every one of us and such perfect peace and rest. He has such joy and strength if we can only come into, and be kept in, the right attitude toward Him.

I will take my text from the parable of the Vine and the Branches, in John, chapter fifteen, verse five: "I am the vine, ye are the branches." Especially these words: "Ye are the branches."

What a simple thing it is to be a branch, the branch of a tree, or the branch of a vine! The branch grows out of the vine, or out of the tree, and there it lives and grows and, in due time, bears fruit. It has no responsibility except to receive sap and nourishment from the root and stem. And if only we knew, by the Holy Spirit, about our relationship to Jesus Christ, our work would be changed into the brightest and most heavenly thing on earth. Instead of there ever being soul-weariness or exhaustion, our work would be like a new experience, linking us to Jesus as nothing else can. For, is it not true that often our work comes between us and Jesus? What folly! The very work that He has to do in me, and 1 for Him, I take up in such a way that it separates me from Christ. Many a laborer in the vineyard has complained that he has too much work, and not enough time for close communion with Jesus. He complains that his usual work weakens his inclination for prayer, and that his many conversations with men darken the spiritual life. Sad thought, that the bearing of fruit should separate the branch from the vine! That must be because we have looked on our work as something other than the branch bearing fruit. May God deliver us from every false .thought about the Christian life.

Now, just a few thoughts about this blessed branch-life.

ABSOLUTE DEPENDENCE

In the first place, it is a life of absolute dependence. The branch has nothing; it just depends on the vine for everything. Absolute dependence is one of the most solemn and precious of thoughts. A great German theologian wrote two large volumes some years ago to show that the whole of Calvin's theology is summed up in that one principle of absolute dependence upon God; and he was right. Another great writer has said that absolute, unalterable dependence upon God alone is the essence of the religion of angels. It should also be that of men. God is everything to the angels, and He is willing to be everything to the Christian. If I can learn to depend on God every moment of the day, everything will come right. You will receive the higher life if you depend absolutely on God.

Now, here we find it with the vine and the branches. Every vine you ever see, or every bunch of grapes that come to your table, let it remind you that the branch is absolutely dependent on the vine. The vine has to do the work, and the branch enjoys the fruit of it.

What has the vine to do? It has to do a great work. It has to send its roots out into the soil and hunt under the ground-the roots often extend a long way out-for nourishment, and to drink in the moisture. Put certain elements of manure in certain directions, and the vine sends its roots there. Then, its roots or stems turn the moisture and manure into that special sap which makes the fruit that is borne. The vine does the work, and the branch has just to receive the sap from the vine. The sap is then changed into grapes. I have been told that at Hampton Court, London, there was a vine that sometimes bore a couple of thousand bunches of grapes. People were astonished at its large growth and rich fruitage. Afterward, the cause was discovered. The Thames River flows nearby, so the vine had stretched its roots hundreds of yards under the ground until it had come to the riverside. There, in all the rich slime of the riverbed, it had found rich nourishment, and obtained moisture. The roots had drawn the sap all that distance up and up into the vine. As a result, there was the abundant, rich harvest. The vine had the work to do, and the branches had just to depend on the vine and receive what it gave.

Is that literally true of my Lord Jesus? Must I understand that when I have to work, when I have to preach a sermon or address a Bible class or go out and visit the poor, neglected ones, that all the responsibility of the work is on Christ? That is exactly what Christ wants you to understand. Christ desires that in all your work the very foundation should be the simple, blessed consciousness: Christ must care for all. And how does He fulfill the trust of that dependence? He does it by sending down the Holy Spirit-not now and then only as a special gift. But remember, the relationship between the vine and the branches is such that hourly, daily, unceasingly, the living connection is maintained. The sap does not flow for a time, and then stop, and then flow again. Instead, moment to moment, the sap flows from the vine to the branches. And just so, my Lord Jesus wants me to take that blessed position as a worker. Morning by morning and day by day and hour by hour and step by step-in every work-I have to go out to abide before Him in the simple, utter helplessness of one who knows nothing. I must be as one who is nothing, and can do nothing. Oh, beloved workers, study that word nothing. You sometimes sing: "Oh, to be nothing, nothing"; but have you really studied that word and prayed every day and worshipped God in the light of it? Do you know the blessedness of that word nothing?

If I am something, then God is not everything; but when I become nothing, God can become all. The everlasting God in Christ can reveal Himself fully. That is the higher life. We need to become nothing. Someone has well said that the seraphim and cherubim are flames of fire because they know they are nothing, and they allow God to put His fullness and His glory and brightness into them. Oh, become nothing in deep reality, and, as a worker, study only one thing-to become poorer and lower and more helpless, that Christ may work all in you.

Workers, here is your first lesson: learn to be nothing, learn to be helpless. The man who has got something is not absolutely dependent. But the man who has got nothing is absolutely dependent. Absolute dependence on God is the secret of all power in work. The branch has nothing but what it gets from the vine. You and I can have nothing but what we get from Jesus.

DEEP RESTFULNESS

But second, the life of the branch is not only a life of entire dependence, but also of deep restfulness.

That little branch, if it could think, feel, and speak, and if we could say: "Come, branch of the vine, I want to learn

from you how I can be a true branch of the living Vine," what would it answer? The little branch would whisper: "Man, I hear that you are wise, and I know that you can do a great many wonderful things. I know you have much strength and wisdom given to you, but I have one lesson for you. With all your hurry and effort in Christ's work, you never prosper. The first thing you need is to come and rest in your Lord Jesus. That is what I do. Since I grew out of that vine, I have spent years and years, and all I have done is just to rest in the vine. When the time of spring came I had no anxious thought or care. The vine began to pour its sap into me, and to give the bud and leaf. And when summer came, I had no care; and in the great heat, I trusted the vine to bring moisture to keep me fresh. And in the time of harvest, when the owner came to pluck the grapes, I had no care. If there was anything in the grapes not good, the owner never blamed the branch; the blame was always on the vine. And if you would be a true branch of Christ, the living Vine, just rest on Him. Let Christ bear the responsibility."

You say: "Won't that make me slothful?"

I tell you it will not. No one who learns to rest on the living Christ can become slothful. The closer your contact with Christ, the more the Spirit of His zeal and love will be borne in upon you. But, oh, begin to work in the midst of your entire dependence by adding to that deep restfulness. A man sometimes tries and tries to be dependent on Christ, but he worries himself about this absolute dependence. He tries and he cannot get it. But let him sink down into entire restfulness every day.

In Thy strong hand I lay me down.

So shall the work be done;

For who can work so wondrously

As the Almighty One?

Workers, take your place every day at the feet of Jesus, in the blessed peace and rest that come from the knowledge- I have no care, my cares are His! I have no fear, He cares for all my fears.

Come, children of God, and understand that it is the Lord Jesus who wants to work through you. You complain of the lack of fervent love. It will come from Jesus. He will give the divine love in your heart with which you can love people. That is the meaning of the assurance: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Romans 5:5); and of that other word: "The love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Corinthians 5:14). Christ can give you a fountain of love so that you cannot help loving the most wretched and the most ungrateful, or those who have wearied you. Rest in Christ, who can give wisdom and strength. You do not know how that restfulness will often prove to be the very best part of your message. You plead with people and you argue, and they get the idea: "There is a man arguing and striving with me." But if you will let the deep rest of God come over you-the rest in Christ Jesus, the peace and the rest and holiness of heaven-that restfulness will bring a blessing to the heart, even more than the words you speak.

MUCH FRUITFULNESS

But third, the branch teaches a lesson of much fruitfulness.

The Lord Jesus Christ repeated the word fruit often in that parable. He spoke, first, of fruit, and then of more fruit,

and then of much fruit. Yes, you are ordained not only to bear fruit, but to bear much fruit. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit" (John 15:8). In the first place, Christ said: "I am the true Vine, and my Father is the Husbandman" (John 15:1). God will watch over the connection between Christ and the branches. It is in the power of God through Christ that we are to bear fruit.

Oh, Christians, you know this world is perishing for lack of workers. And it lacks more than workers. Many workers are saying, some more earnestly than others: "We need not only more workers, but we need our workers to have a new powera different life-so that we workers would be able to bring more blessing." Children of God, I appeal to you. You know what trouble you take, say, in a case of sickness. You have a beloved friend apparently in danger of death, and nothing can refresh that friend so much as a few grapes. But, they are out of season. Still, what trouble you will take to get the grapes that are to be the nourishment of this dying friend! And, there are people around who never go to church, and so many who go to church, but do not know Christ. And yet, the heavenly grapes-the grapes of the heavenly Vine-are not to be had at any price except as the child of God bears them out of his inner life in fellowship with Christ. Except the children of God are filled with the sap of the heavenly Vine, except they are filled with the Holy Spirit and the love of Jesus, they cannot bear much of the real heavenly grape. We all confess there is a great deal of work, a great deal of preaching, teaching, and visiting, a great deal of machinery, and a great deal of earnest effort of every kind. But, there is not much manifestation of the power of God in it.

What is wanting? The close connection between the worker and the heavenly Vine is lacking. Christ, the heavenly Vine, has blessings that He could pour on tens of thousands who are perishing. Christ, the heavenly Vine, has power to provide the heavenly grapes. But "Ye are the branches," and you cannot bear heavenly fruit unless you are in close connection with Jesus Christ.

Do not confuse work and fruit. There may be a good deal of work for Christ that is not the fruit of the heavenly Vine. Do not seek for work only. Oh! study this question of fruit-bearing. It means the very life, power, spirit, and love within the heart of the Son of God. It means the heavenly Vine Himself coming into your hearts and mine.

You know there are different sorts of grapes, each with a different name. Every vine provides exactly that peculiar aroma and juice which gives the grape its particular flavor and taste. Just so, there is in the heart of Christ Jesus a life, a love, a Spirit, a blessing, and a power for men, that are entirely heavenly and divine, and that will come down into our hearts. Stand in close connection with the heavenly Vine and say: "Lord Jesus, nothing less than the sap that flows through You, nothing less than the Spirit of Your divine life is what we ask. Lord Jesus, I pray, let Your Spirit flow through me in all my work for You." I tell you again that the sap of the heavenly Vine is nothing but the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the life of the heavenly Vine. What you must get from Christ is nothing less than a strong inflow of the Holy Spirit. You need it exceedingly, and you want nothing more than that. Remember that. Do not expect Christ to give a bit of strength here, and a bit of blessing yonder, and a bit of help over there. As the vine does its work in giving its own peculiar sap to the branch, so expect Christ to give His own Holy Spirit into your heart. Then you will bear much fruit. Perhaps you have only begun to bear fruit, and are listening to the word of Christ in the parable, "more fruit," "much fruit." Remember, that in order for you to bear more fruit, you just require more of Jesus in your life and heart.

We ministers of the Gospel, how we are in danger of getting into a condition of work, work, work! And we pray over it, but the freshness, buoyancy, and joy of the heavenly life are not always present. Let us seek to understand that the life of the branch is a life of much fruit, because it is a life rooted in Christ, the living, heavenly Vine.

CLOSE COMMUNION

And fourth, the life of the branch is a life of close communion.

Let us again ask: What has the branch to do? You know that precious, inexhaustible word that Christ used-Abide. Your life is to be an abiding life. And how is the abiding to be? It is to be just like the branch in the vine, abiding every minute of the day. The branches are in close communion, in unbroken communion, with the vine, from January to December. And can I not live every day-it is to me an almost terrible thing that we should ask the question-in abiding communion with the heavenly Vine?

You say: "But I am so occupied with other things."

You may have ten hours' hard work daily, during which your brain has to be occupied with temporal things. God orders it so. But the abiding work is the work of the heart, not of the brain. It is the work of the heart clinging to and resting in Jesus, a work in which the Holy Spirit links us to Christ Jesus. Oh, do believe that deeper down than the brain, deep down in the inner life, you can abide in Christ, so that every moment you are free, the consciousness will come: "Blessed Jesus, I am still in You." If you will learn for a time to put aside other work and to get into this abiding contract with the heavenly Vine, you will find that fruit will come. What is the application to our life of this abiding communion? What does it mean? It means close fellowship with Christ in secret prayer. I am sure there are Christians who do long for the higher life, and who sometimes have received a great blessing. I am sure there are those who have at times found a great inflow of heavenly joy and a great outflow of heavenly gladness. Yet, after a time, it has passed away. They have not understood that close, personal communion with Christ is an absolute necessity for daily life. Take time to be alone with Christ. Nothing in heaven or earth can free you from the necessity for that, if you are to be happy and holy Christians.

Oh! how many Christians look on it as a burden and a tax, a duty and a difficulty, to often be alone with God! That is the great hindrance to our Christian life everywhere. We need more quiet fellowship with God. I tell you in the name of the heavenly Vine that you cannot be healthy branches-branches into which the heavenly sap can flow-unless you take plenty of time for communion with God. If you are not willing to sacrifice time to get alone with Him, and to give Him time everyday to work in you, and to keep up the link of connection between you and Himself, He cannot give you that blessing of His unbroken fellowship. Jesus Christ asks you to live in close communion with Him. Let every heart say: "O Christ, it is this I long for. It is this I choose." And He will gladly give it to you.

ABSOLUTE SURRENDER

And then finally, the life of the branch is a life of absolute surrender.

These words, absolute surrender, are great and solemn. I believe we do not fully understand their meaning. But yet the little branch preaches it. "Have you anything to do, little branch, besides bearing grapes?" "No, nothing."

"Are you fit for nothing?"

Fit for nothing! The Bible says that a bit of vine cannot even be used as a pen. It is fit for nothing but to be burned. "And now, what do you understand, little branch, about your relationship to the vine?" "My relationship is just this: I am utterly given up to the vine, and the vine can give me as much or as little sap as it chooses. Here I

am, at its disposal, and the vine can do with me what it likes."

Oh, friends, we need this absolute surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ. The more I speak, the more I feel that this is one of the most difficult points to make clear. It is also one of the most important and needful points to explain what this absolute surrender is. It is often an easy thing for a man or a number of men to come out and offer themselves up God for entire consecration, saying: "Lord, it is my desire to give myself up entirely to You." That is of great value, and often brings very rich blessing. But the one question I ought to study quietly is: What is meant by absolute surrender?

It means that, as literally as Christ was given up entirely to God, I am given up entirely to Christ. Is that too strong? Some think so. Some think that can never be. They cannot believe that just as entirely and absolutely as Christ gave up His life to do nothing but seek the Father's pleasure, and depend on the Father absolutely and entirely, I am to do nothing but to seek the pleasure of Christ. But that is actually true. Christ Jesus came to breathe His own Spirit into us. He came to help us find our very highest happiness in living entirely for God, just as He did. Oh, beloved brethren, if that is the case, then I ought to say: "Yes, as true as it is of that little branch of the vine, by God's grace, I would have it to be true of me. I would live day by day that Christ may be able to do with me what He will."

Ah! here comes the terrible mistake that lies at the bottom of so much of our own Christianity. A man thinks: "I have my business and family duties, and my responsibilities as a citizen. All this I cannot change. And now alongside all this, I am to take Christianity and the service of God as something that will keep me from sin. God help me to perform my duties properly!"

This is not right. When Christ came, He bought the sinner with His blood. If-there was a slave market here and I were to buy a slave, I would take that slave away to my own house from his old surroundings. He would live at my house as my personal property, and I could order him about all day. And if he were a faithful slave, he would live as having no will and no interests of his own. His one care would be to promote the well-being and honor of his master. And in like manner I, who have been bought with the blood of Christ, have been bought to live every day with the one thought-How can I please my Master? Oh, we find the Christian life so difficult because we seek God's blessing while we live in our own will. We desire to live the Christian life according to our own liking. We make our own plans and choose our own work. Then, we ask the Lord Jesus to come in and make sure that sin will not conquer us too much, and that we will not go too far wrong. We ask Him to come in and give us so much of His blessing. But our relationship to Jesus ought to be such that we are entirely at His disposal. Every day we are to come to Him humbly and straightforwardly and say: "Lord, is there anything in me that is not according to Your will, that has not been ordered by You, or that is not entirely given up to You?"

Oh, if we could wait patiently, I tell you what the result would be. A relationship between us and Christ would spring up. It would be so close and so tender that afterward we would be amazed at how we formerly could have lived with the idea: "I am surrendered to Christ." We would feel how distant our fellowship with Him had previously been. We would understand that He can, and does indeed, come and take actual possession of us, and give us unbroken fellowship all day. The branch calls us to absolute surrender.

Now I do not speak so much about the giving up of sins. There are people who need that, people who have got violent tempers, bad habits, and actual sins which they from time to time commit, and which they have never given up into the very bosom of the Lamb of God. I pray you, if you are branches of the living Vine, do not keep one sin back. I know there are a great many difficulties about this question of holiness. I know that all do not think exactly the same with regard to it. To me, that would be a matter of comparative indifference if I could see

that all are honestly longing to be free from every sin. But I am afraid that unconsciously there are often compromises in hearts, with the idea that we cannot be without sin. There are those who think that we must sin a little every day; we cannot help it. Oh, that people would actually cry to God: "Lord, do keep me from sin!"Give yourself utterly to Jesus, and ask Him to do His very utmost for you in keeping you from sin.

There is a great deal in our work, in our church, and in our surroundings that we found in the world when we were born into it. It has grown all around us and we think that it is all right, that it cannot be changed. We do not come to the Lord Jesus and ask Him about it. Oh! I advise you, Christians, bring everything into relationship with Jesus, and say: "Lord, everything in my life has to be in most complete harmony with my position as a branch of You, the blessed Vine."

Let your surrender to Christ be absolute. I do not understand that word surrender fully. It gets new meanings every now and then. It enlarges immensely from time to time. But I advise you to speak it out: "Absolute surrender to You, Oh Christ, is what I have chosen." And Christ will show you what is not according to His mind, and lead you on to deeper and higher blessedness.

In conclusion, let me gather up all in one sentence. Christ Jesus said: "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." In other words: "I, the living One who have so completely given Myself to you, am the Vine. It is impossible to trust Me too much. I am the Almighty Worker, full of a divine life and power."

You are the branches of the Lord Jesus Christ. If there is in your heart the consciousness that you are not a strong, healthy, fruit-bearing branch-not closely linked with Jesus, not living in Him as you should be-then listen to Him say: "I am the Vine; I will receive you. I will draw you to Myself; I will bless you. I will strengthen you; I will fill you with My Spirit. I, the Vine, have taken you to be My branches. I have given Myself utterly to you; children, give yourselves utterly to Me. I have surrendered Myself as God absolutely to you. I became man and died for you that I might be entirely yours. Come and surrender yourselves entirely to be Mine."

What shall our answer be? Oh, let it be prayer from the depths of our heart, that the living Christ may take each one of us and link us closely to Himself. Let our prayer be that He, the living Vine, will so link each of us to Himself that we will go away with our hearts singing: "He is my Vine, and I am His branch-I want nothing more-now that I have the everlasting Vine."Then, when you get alone with Him, worship and adore Him; praise and trust Him; love Him and wait for His love. "You are my Vine, and I am Your branch. It is enough; my soul is satisfied."

Glory to His blessed name!

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

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PREFACE

I have felt drawn to try to write what young Christians might easily apprehend, as a help to them to take up that position in which the Christian life must be a success. It is as if there is not one of the principal temptations and failures of the Christian life that is not met here. The nearness, the all-sufficiency, the faithfulness of the Lord Jesus, the naturalness, the fruitfulness of a life of faith, are so revealed, that it is as if one could with confidence say, Let the parable enter into the heart, and all will be right.

May the blessed Lord give the blessing. May He teach us to study the mystery of the Vine in the spirit of worship, waiting for God's own teaching.

ONLY A BRANCH

"I am the vine, ye are the branches."—John 15.5

"Tis only a little Branch,
A thing so fragile and weak,
But that little Branch hath a message true
To give, could it only speak.

"I'm only a little Branch,
I live by a life not mine,
For the sap that flows through my tendrils small
Is the life-blood of the Vine.

"No power indeed have I
The fruit of myself to bear,
But since I'm part of the living Vine,
Its fruitfulness I share.

"Dost thou ask how I abide?
How this life I can maintain?—
I am bound to the Vine by life's strong band,
And I only need remain.

"Where first my life was given,
In the spot where I am set,
Upborne and upheld as the days go by,
By the stem which bears me yet.

"I fear not the days to come,
I dwell not upon the past,
As moment by moment I draw a life,

Which for evermore shall last.

“I bask in the sun’s bright beams,
Which with sweetness fills my fruit,
Yet I own not the clusters hanging there,
For they all come from the root.”

A life which is not my own,
But another’s life in me:
This, this is the message the Branch would speak,
A message to thee and me.

Oh, struggle not to “abide,”
Nor labor to “bring forth fruit,”
But let Jesus unite thee to Himself,
As the Vine Branch to the root.

So simple, so deep, so strong
That union with Him shall be:
His life shall forever replace thine own,
And His love shall flow through thee.

For His Spirit’s fruit is love,
And love shall thy life become,
And for evermore on His heart of love
Thy spirit shall have her home.

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

THE VINE

I am the True Vine - John 15.1

All earthly things are the shadows of heavenly realities - the expression, in created, visible forms, of the invisible glory of God. The Life and the Truth are in Heaven; on earth we have figures and shadows of the heavenly truths. When Jesus says: "I am the true Vine, He tells us that all the vines of earth are pictures and emblems of Himself. He is the divine reality, of which they are the created expression. They all point to Him, and preach Him, and reveal Him. If you would know Jesus, study the vine.

How many eyes have gazed on and admired a great vine with its beautiful fruit. Come and gaze on the heavenly Vine till your eye turns from all else to admire Him. How many, in a sunny clime, sit and rest under the shadow of a vine. Come and be still under the shadow of the true Vine, and rest under it from the heat of the day. What countless numbers rejoice in the fruit of the vine! Come, and take, and eat of the heavenly fruit of the true Vine, and let your soul say: "I sat under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste."

I am the true Vine. - This is a heavenly mystery. The earthly vine can teach you much about this Vine of Heaven. Many interesting and beautiful points of comparison suggest themselves, and help us to get conceptions of what Christ meant. But such thoughts do not teach us to know what the heavenly Vine really is, in its cooling shade, and its life-giving fruit. The experience of this is part of the hidden mystery, which none but Jesus Himself, by His Holy Spirit, can unfold and impart.

I am the true Vine. - The vine is the living Lord, who Himself speaks, and gives, and works all that He has for us. If you would know the meaning and power of that word, do not think to find it by thought or study; these may help to show you what you must get from Him to awaken desire and hope and prayer, but they cannot show you the Vine. Jesus alone can reveal Himself. He gives His Holy Spirit to open the eyes to gaze upon Himself, to open the heart to receive Himself. He must Himself speak the word to you and me.

I am the true Vine. - And what am I to do, if I want the mystery, in all its heavenly beauty and blessing, opened up to me? With what you already know of the parable, bow down and be still, worship and wait, until the divine Word enters your heart, and you feel His holy presence with you, and in you. The overshadowing of His holy love will give you the perfect calm and rest of knowing that the Vine will do all.

I am the true Vine. - He who speaks is God, in His infinite power able to enter into us. He is man, one with us. He is the crucified One, who won a perfect righteousness and a divine life for us through His death. He is the glorified One, who from the throne gives His Spirit to make His presence real and true. He speaks - oh, listen, not to His words only, but to Himself, as He whispers secretly day by day: "I am the true Vine! All that the Vine can ever be to its branch, "*I will be to you."*

Holy Lord Jesus, the heavenly Vine of God's own planting, I beseech Thee, reveal Thyself to my soul. Let the Holy Spirit, not only in thought, but in experience, give me to know all that Thou, the Son of God, art to me as the true Vine.

The True Vine

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THE HUSBANDMAN

And My Father is the Husbandman - John 15.1

A vine must have a husbandman to plant and watch over it, to receive and rejoice in its fruit. Jesus says: "My Father is the husbandman." He was "the vine of God's planting." All He was and did, He owed to the Father; in all He only sought the Father's will and glory. He had become man to show us what a creature ought to be to its Creator. He took our place, and the spirit of His life before the Father was ever what He seeks to make ours: "Of him, and through him, and to him are all things." He became the true Vine, that we might be true branches. Both in regard to Christ and ourselves the words teach us the two lessons of absolute dependence and perfect confidence.

My Father is the Husbandman. - Christ ever lived in the spirit of what He once said: "The Son can do nothing of himself." As dependent as a vine is on a husbandman for the place where it is to grow, for its fencing in and watering and pruning. Christ felt Himself entirely dependent on the Father every day for the wisdom and the strength to do the Father's will. As He said in the previous chapter (14:10): "The words that I say unto you, I speak not from Myself; but the Father abiding in Me doeth his works." This absolute dependence had as its blessed counterpart the most blessed confidence that He had nothing to fear: the Father could not disappoint Him. With such a Husbandman as His Father, He could enter death and the grave. He could trust God to raise Him up. All that Christ is and has, He has, not in Himself, but from the Father.

My Father is the Husbandman. - That is as blessedly true for us as for Christ. Christ is about to teach His disciples about their being branches. Before He ever uses the word, or speaks at all of abiding in Him or bearing fruit, He turns their eyes heavenward to the Father watching over them, and working all in them. At the very root of all Christian life lies the thought that God is to do all, that our work is to give and leave ourselves in His hands, in the confession of utter helplessness and dependence, in the assured confidence that He gives all we need. The great lack of the Christian life is that, even where we trust Christ, we leave God out of the count. Christ came to bring us to God. Christ lived the life of a man exactly as we have to live it. Christ the Vine points to God the Husbandman. As He trusted God, let us trust God, that everything we ought to be and have, as those who belong to the Vine, will be given us from above.

Isaiah said: "A vineyard of red wine; I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." Ere we begin to think of fruit or branches, let us have our heart filled with the faith: as glorious as the Vine, is the Husbandman. As high and holy as is our calling, so mighty and loving is the God who will work it all. As surely as the Husbandman made the Vine what it was to be, will He make each branch what it is to be. Our Father is our Husbandman, the Surety for our growth and fruit.

Blessed Father, we are Thy husbandry. Oh, that Thou mayest have honor of the work of Thy hands! O my Father, I desire to open my heart to the joy of this wondrous truth: My Father is the Husbandman. Teach me to know and trust Thee, and to see that the same deep interest with which Thou caredst for and delightedst in the Vine, extends to every branch, to me too.

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

THE BRANCH

Every Branch in me that Beareth Not Fruit, He taketh It away - John 15.2

Here we have one of the chief words of the parable - *branch.* A vine needs branches: without branches it can do nothing, can bear no fruit. As important as it is to know about the Vine, and the Husbandman, it is to realize what the branch is. Before we listen to what Christ has to say about it, let us first of all take in what a branch is, and what it teaches us of our life in Christ. A branch is simply a bit of wood, brought forth by the vine for the one purpose of serving it in bearing its fruit. It is of the very same nature as the vine, and has one life and one spirit with it. Just think a moment of the lessons this suggests.

There is the lesson of *entire consecration.* The branch has but one object for which it exists, one purpose to which it is entirely given up. That is, to bear the fruit the vine wishes to bring forth. And so the believer has but one reason for his being a branch - *but one reason for his existence on earth* - that the heavenly Vine may through him bring forth His fruit. Happy the soul that knows this, that has consented to it, and that says, I have been redeemed and I live for one thing - as exclusively as the natural branch exists only to bring forth fruit, I too; as exclusively as the heavenly Vine exists to bring forth fruit, I too. As I have been planted by God into Christ, I have wholly given myself to bear the fruit the Vine desires to bring forth.

There is the lesson of *perfect conformity.* The branch is exactly like the vine in every aspect - the same nature, the same life, the same place, the same work. In all this they are inseparably one. And so the believer needs to know that he is partaker of the divine nature, and has the very nature and spirit of Christ in him, and that his one calling is to yield himself to a perfect conformity to Christ. The branch is a perfect likeness of the vine; the only difference is, the one is great and strong, and the source of strength, the other little and feeble, ever needing and receiving strength. Even so the believer is, and is to be, the perfect likeness of Christ.

There is the lesson of *absolute dependence.* The vine has its stores of life and sap and strength, not for itself, but for the branches. The branches are and have nothing but what the vine provides and imparts. The believer is called to, and it is his highest blessedness to enter upon, a life of entire and unceasing dependence upon Christ. Day and night, every moment, Christ is to work in him all he needs.

And then the lesson of *undoubting confidence.* The branch has no cure; the vine provides all; it has but to yield itself and receive. It is the sight of this truth that leads to the blessed rest of faith, the true secret of growth and strength: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

What a life would come to us if we only consented to be branches! Dear child of God, learn the lesson. You have but one thing to do: Only be a branch - nothing more, nothing less! Just be a branch; Christ will be the Vine that gives all. And the Husbandman, the mighty God, who made the Vine what it is, *will as surely make the branch what it ought to be.*

Lord Jesus, I pray Thee, reveal to me the heavenly mystery of the branch, in its living union with the Vine, in its claim on all its fullness. And let Thy all-sufficiency, holding and filling Thy branches, lead me to the rest of faith

that knows that Thou workest all.

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

THE FRUIT

Every Branch in me That Beareth Not Fruit, He Taketh It Away - John 15.2

Fruit. - This is the next great word we have: the Vine, the Husbandman, the branch, the fruit. What has our Lord to say to us of fruit? Simply this - that fruit is the one thing the branch is for, and that if it bear not fruit, the husbandman takes it away. The vine is the glory of the husbandman; the branch is the glory of the vine; the fruit is the glory of the branch; if the branch bring not forth fruit, there is no glory or worth in it; it is an offense and a hindrance; the husbandman takes it away. The one reason for the existence of a branch, the one mark of being a true branch of the heavenly Vine, the one condition of being allowed by the divine Husbandman to share the life the Vine is - bearing fruit.

And what is fruit? Something that the branch bears, not for itself, but for its owner; something that is to be gathered, and taken away. The branch does indeed receive it from the vine sap for its own life, by which it grows thicker and stronger. But this supply for its own maintenance is entirely subordinate to its fulfillment of the purpose of its existence - bearing fruit. It is because Christians do not understand or accept of this truth, that they so fail in their efforts and prayers to live the branch life. They often desire it very earnestly; they read and meditate and pray, and yet they fail, they wonder why? The reason is very simple: they do not know that *fruit-bearing is the one thing they have been saved for*. Just as entirely as Christ became the true Vine with the one object, you have been made a branch too, with the one object of bearing fruit for the salvation of men. The Vine and the branch are equally under the unchangeable law of fruit-bearing as the one reason of their being. Christ and the believer, the heavenly Vine and the branch, have equally their place in the world exclusively for one purpose, to carry God's saving love to men. Hence the solemn word: Every branch that beareth not fruit, He taketh it away.

Let us specially beware of one great mistake. Many Christians think their own salvation is the first thing; their temporal life and prosperity, with the care of their family, the second; and what of time and interest is left may be devoted to fruit-bearing, to the saving of men. No wonder that in most cases very little time or interest can be found. No, Christian, the one object with which you have been made a member of Christ's Body is that the Head may have you to carry out His saving work. The one object God had in making you a branch is that Christ may through you bring life to men. Your personal salvation, your business and care for your family, *are entirely subordinate to this.* Your first aim in life, your first aim every day, should be to know how Christ desires to carry out His purpose in you.

Let us begin to think as God thinks. Let us accept Christ's teaching and respond to it. The one object of my being a branch, the one mark of my being a true branch, the one condition of my abiding and growing strong, is that I bear the fruit of the heavenly Vine for dying men to eat and live. And the one thing of which I can have the most perfect assurance is that, with Christ as my Vine, and the Father as my Husbandman, I can indeed be a fruitful branch.

Our Father, Thou comest seeking fruit. Teach us, we pray Thee, to realize how truly this is the one object of our existence, and of our union to Christ. Make it the one desire of our hearts to be branches, so filled with the Spirit

of the Vine, as to bring forth fruit abundantly.

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

MORE FRUIT

And Every Branch That Beareth Fruit, He Cleanseth, That it May Bear More Fruit - John 15.2

The thought of fruit is so prominent in the eye of Him who sees things as they are, fruit is so truly the one thing God has set His heart upon, that our Lord, after having said that the branch that bears no fruit is taken away, at once adds: and where there is fruit, the one desire of the Husbandman is more fruit. As the gift of His grace, as the token of spiritual vigor, as the showing forth of the glory of God and of Christ, as the only way for satisfying the need of the world, God longs and fits for, more fruit.

More Fruit - This is a very searching word. As churches and individuals we are in danger of nothing so much as self-contentment. The secret spirit of Laodicea - we are rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing - may prevail where it is not suspected. The divine warning - poor and wretched and miserable - finds little response just where it is most needed.

Let us not rest content with the thought that we are taking an equal share with others in the work that is being done, or that men are satisfied with our efforts in Christ's service, or even point to us as examples. Let our only desire be to know whether we are bearing all the fruit Christ is willing to give through us as living branches, in close and living union with Himself, whether we are satisfying the loving heart of the great Husbandman, our Father in Heaven, in His desire for more fruit.

More Fruit - The word comes with divine authority to search and test our life: the true disciple will heartily surrender himself to its holy light, and will earnestly ask that God Himself may show what there may be lacking in the measure or the character of the fruit he bears. Do let us believe that the Word is meant to lead us on to a fuller experience of the Father's purpose of love, of Christ's fullness, and of the wonderful privilege of bearing much fruit in the salvation of men.

More Fruit - The word is a most encouraging one. Let us listen to it. It is just to the branch that is bearing fruit that the message comes: more fruit. God does not demand this as Pharaoh the task-master, or as Moses the lawgiver, without providing the means. He comes as a Father, who gives what He asks, and works what He commands. He comes to us as the living branches of the living Vine, and offers to work the more fruit in us, if we but yield ourselves into His hands. Shall we not admit the claim, accept the offer, and look to Him to work it in us?

"That it may bear more fruit": do let us believe that as the owner of a vine does everything to make the fruitage as rich and large as possible, the divine Husbandman will do all that is needed to make us bear more fruit. All He asks is, that we set our heart's desire on it, entrust ourselves to His working and care, and joyfully look to Him to do His perfect work in us. God has set His heart on more fruit; Christ waits to work it in us; let us joyfully look up to our divine Husbandman and our heavenly Vine, to ensure our bearing more fruit.

Our Father which art in Heaven, Thou art the heavenly Husbandman. And Christ is the heavenly Vine. And I am a heavenly branch, partaker of His heavenly life, to bear His heavenly fruit. Father, let the power of His life so fill

me, that I may ever bear more fruit, to the glory of Thy name.

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

THE CLEANSING

Every Branch That Beareth Fruit, He Cleanseth It, That It May Bear More Fruit - John 15.2

There are two remarkable things about the vine. There is not a plant of which the fruit has so much spirit in it, of which spirit can be so abundantly distilled as the vine. And there is not a plant which so soon runs into wild wood, that hinders its fruit, and therefore needs the most merciless pruning. I look out of my window here on large vineyards: the chief care of the vinedresser is the pruning. You may have a trellis vine rooting so deep in good soil that it needs neither digging, nor manuring, nor watering: pruning it cannot dispense with, if it is to bear good fruit. Some tree needs occasional pruning; others bear perfect fruit without any: the vine must have it. And so our Lord tells us, here at the very outset of the parable, that the one work the Father does to the branch that bears fruit is: He cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit.

Consider a moment what this pruning or cleansing is. It is not the removal of weeds or thorns, or anything from without that may hinder the growth. No; it is the cutting off of the long shoots of the previous year, the removal of something that comes from within, that has been produced by the life of the vine itself. It is the removal of something that is a proof of the vigor of its life; the more vigorous the growth has been, the greater the need for the pruning. It is the honest, healthy wood of the vine that has to be cut away. And why? Because it would consume too much of the sap to fill all the long shoots of last year's growth: the sap must be saved up and used for fruit alone. The branches, sometimes eight and ten feet long, are cut down close to the stem, and nothing is left but just one or two inches of wood, enough to bear the grapes. It is when everything that is not needful for fruit-bearing has been relentlessly cut down, and just as little of the branches as possible has been left, that full, rich fruit may be expected.

What a solemn, precious lesson! It is not to sin only that the cleansing of the Husbandman here refers. It is to our own religious activity, as it is developed in the very act of bearing fruit. It is this that must be cut down and cleansed away. We have, in working for God, to use our natural gifts of wisdom, or eloquence, or influence, or zeal. And yet they are ever in danger of being unduly developed, and then trusted in. And so, after each season of work, God has to bring us to the end of ourselves, to the consciousness of the helplessness and the danger of all that is of man, to feel that we are nothing. All that is to be left of us is just enough to receive the power of the life-giving sap of the Holy Spirit. What is of man must be reduced to its very lowest measure. All that is inconsistent with the most entire devotion to Christ's service must be removed. The more perfect the cleansing and cutting away of all that is of self, the less of surface over which the Holy Spirit is to be spread, so much the more intense can be the concentration of our whole being, to be entirely at the disposal of the Spirit. This is the true circumcision of the heart, the circumcision of Christ. This is the true crucifixion with Christ, bearing about the dying of the Lord Jesus in the body.

Blessed cleansing, God's own cleansing! How we may rejoice in the assurance that we shall bring forth more fruit.

O our holy Husbandman, cleanse and cut away all that there is in us that would make a fair show, or could become a source of self-confidence and glorying. Lord, keep us very low, that no flesh may glory in Thy presence. We do trust Thee to do Thy work.

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

THE PRUNING KNIFE

Already Ye Are Clean Because of the Word I Have Spoken Unto You - John 15.3

What is the pruning knife of this heavenly Husbandman? It is often said to be affliction. By no means in the first place. How would it then fare with many who have long seasons free from adversity; or with some on whom God appears to shower down kindness all their life long? No; it is the Word of God that is the knife, shaper than any two-edged sword, that pierces even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and is quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. It is only when affliction leads to this discipline of the Word that it becomes a blessing; the lack of this heart-cleansing through the Word is the reason why affliction is so often unsanctified. Not even Paul's thorn in the flesh could become a blessing until Christ's Word - "My strength is made perfect in weakness" - had made him see the danger of self-exaltation, and made him willing to rejoice in infirmities.

The Word of God's pruning knife. Jesus says: "Ye are already clean, because of the word I have spoken unto you." How searchingly that word had been spoken by Him, out of whose mouth there went a sharp two-edged sword, as he had taught them! "Except a man deny himself, lose his life, forsake all, hate father and mother, he cannot be My disciple, he is not worthy of Me"; or as He humbled their pride, or reproved their lack of love, or foretold their all forsaking Him. From the opening of His ministry in the Sermon on the Mount to His words of warning in the last night, His Word had tried and cleansed them. He had discovered and condemned all there was of self; they were now emptied and cleansed, ready for the incoming of the Holy Spirit.

It is as the soul gives up its own thoughts, and men's thoughts of what is religion, and yields itself heartily, humbly, patiently, to the teaching of the Word by the Spirit, that the Father will do His blessed work of pruning and cleansing away all of nature and self that mixes with our work and hinders His Spirit. Let those who would know all the Husbandman can do for them, all the Vine can bring forth through them, seek earnestly to yield themselves heartily to the blessed cleansing through the Word. Let them, in their study of the Word, receive it as a hammer that breaks and opens up, as a fire that melts and refines, as a sword that lays bare and slays all that is of the flesh. The word of conviction will prepare for the word of comfort and of hope, and the Father will cleanse them through the Word.

All ye who are branches of the true Vine, each time you read or hear the Word, wait first of all on Him to use it for His cleansing of the branch. Set your heart upon His desire for more fruit. Trust Him as Husbandman to work it. Yield yourselves in simple childlike surrender to the cleansing work of His Word and Spirit, and you may count upon it that His purpose will be fulfilled in you.

Father, I pray Thee, cleanse me through Thy Word. Let it search out and bring to light all that is of self and the flesh in my religion. Let it cut away every root of self-confidence, that the Vine may find me wholly free to receive His life and Spirit. O my holy Husbandman, I trust Thee to care for the branch as much as for the Vine. Thou only art my hope.

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

ABIDE

Abide in Me, and I in You - John 15.4

When a new graft is placed in a vine and it abides there, there is a twofold process that takes place. The first is in the wood. The graft shoots its little roots and fibers down into the stem, and the stem grows up into the graft, and what has been called the structural union is effected. The graft abides and becomes one with the vine, and even though the vine were to die, would still be one wood with it. Then there is the second process, in which the sap of the vine enters the new structure, and uses it as a passage through which sap can flow up to show itself in young shoots and leaves and fruit. Here is the vital union. Into the graft which abides in the stock, the stock enters with sap to abide in it.

When our Lord says: "Abide in me, and I in you," He points to something analogous to this. "Abide in me": that refers more to that which we have to do. We have to trust and obey, to detach ourselves from all else, to reach out after Him and cling to Him, to sink ourselves into Him. As we do this, through the grace He gives, a character is formed, and a heart prepared for the fuller experience: "I in you," God strengthens us with might by the Spirit in the inner man, and Christ dwells in the heart by faith.

Many believers pray and long very earnestly for the filling of the Spirit and the indwelling of Christ, and wonder that they do not make more progress. The reason is often this, the "I in you" cannot come because the "abide in me" is not maintained. "There is one body and one spirit"; before the Spirit can fill, there must be a body prepared. The graft must have grown into the stem, and be abiding in it before the sap can flow through to bring forth fruit. It is as in lowly obedience we follow Christ, even in external things, denying ourselves, forsaking the world, and even in the body seeking to be conformable to Him, as we thus seek to abide in Him, that we shall be able to receive and enjoy the "I in you." The work enjoined on us: *"Abide in me,"* will prepare us for the work undertaken by Him: "I in you."

In - The two parts of the injunction have their unity in that central deep-meaning word "in." There is no deeper word in Scripture. God is in all. God dwells in Christ. Christ lives in God. We are in Christ. Christ is in us: our life taken up into His; His life received into ours; in a divine reality that words cannot express, we are in Him and He in us. And the words, "Abide in me and I in you," just tell us to believe it, this divine mystery, and to count upon our God the Husbandman, and Christ the Vine, to make it divinely true. No thinking or teaching or praying can grasp it; it is a divine mystery of love. As little as we can effect the union can we understand it. Let us just look upon this infinite, divine, omnipotent Vine loving us, holding us, working in us. Let us in the faith of His working abide and rest in Him, ever turning heart and hope to Him alone. And let us count upon Him to fulfill in us the mystery: "Ye in me, and I in you."

Blessed Lord, Thou dost bid me abide in Thee. How can I, Lord, except Thou show Thyself to me, waiting to receive and welcome and keep me? I pray Thee show me how Thou as Vine undertaketh to do all. To be occupied with Thee is to abide in Thee. Here I am, Lord, a branch, cleansed and abiding - resting in Thee, and awaiting the inflow of Thy life and grace.

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

EXCEPT YE ABIDE

As the Branch Cannot Bear Fruit of Itself, Except It Abide In the Vine; No More Can Ye, Except Ye Abide in Me - John 15.4

We know the meaning of the word *except.* It expresses some indispensable condition, some inevitable law. "The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, *except* it abide in the vine. No more can ye, except ye abide in me." There is but one way for the branch to bear fruit, there is no other possibility, it must abide in unbroken communion with the vine. Not of itself, but only of the vine, does the fruit come. Christ had already said: "Abide in me"; in nature the branch teaches us the lesson so clearly; it is such a wonderful privilege to be called and allowed to abide in the heavenly Vine; one might have thought it needless to add these words of warning. But no - Christ knows so well what a renunciation of self is implied in this: "Abide in me"; how strong and universal the tendency would be to seek to bear fruit by our own efforts; how difficult it would be to get us to believe that actual, continuous abiding in Him is an absolute necessity! He insists upon the truth: *Not of itself* can the branch bear fruit; *except it abide,* it cannot bear fruit. "No more can ye, *except ye abide in me."*

But must this be taken literally? Must I, as exclusively, and manifestly, and unceasingly, and absolutely, as the branch abides in the vine, be equally given up to find my whole life in Christ alone? I must indeed. The *except ye abide* is as universal as the *except it abide.* The *no more can ye* admits of no exception or modification. If I am to be a true branch, if I am to bear fruit, if I am to be what Christ as Vine wants me to be, my whole existence must be as exclusively devoted to abiding in Him, as that of the natural branch is to abiding in its vine.

Let me learn the lesson. Abiding is to be an act of the will and the whole heart. Just as there are degrees in seeking and serving God, "not with a perfect heart," or "with the whole heart," so there may be degrees in abiding. In regeneration the divine life enters us, but does not all at once master and fill our whole being. This comes as matter of command and obedience. There is unspeakable danger of our not giving ourselves with our whole heart to abide. There is unspeakable danger of our giving ourselves to work for God, and to bear fruit, with but little of the true abiding, the wholehearted losing of ourselves in Christ and His life. There is unspeakable danger of much work with but little fruit, for lack of this one thing needful. We must allow the words, "not of itself," "except it abide," to do their work of searching and exposing, of pruning and cleansing, all that there is of self-will and self-confidence in our life; this will deliver us from this great evil, and so prepare us for His teaching, giving the full meaning of the word in us: "Abide in me, and I in you."

Our blessed Lord desires to call us away from ourselves and our own strength, to Himself and His strength. Let us accept the warning, and turn with great fear and self-distrust to Him to do His work. "Our life is hid with Christ in God!" That life is a heavenly mystery, hid from the wise even among Christians, and revealed unto babes. The childlike spirit learns that life is given from Heaven every day and every moment to the soul that accepts the teaching: "not of itself," "except it abide," and seeks its all in the Vine. Abiding in the Vine then comes to be nothing more nor less than the restful surrender of the soul to let Christ have all and work all, as completely as in nature the branch knows and seeks nothing but the vine.

Abide in Me. I have heard, my Lord, that with every command, Thou also givest the power to obey. With Thy

"rise and walk," the lame man leaped, I accept Thy word, "Abide in me," as a word of power, that gives power, and even now I say, Yea, Lord, I will, I do abide in Thee.

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

THE VINE

I am The Vine, Ye Are The Branches - John 15.5

In the previous verse Christ had just said: "Abide in me." He had then announced the great unalterable law of all branch-life, on earth or in Heaven: "not of itself"; "except it abide." In the opening words of the parable He had already spoken: "I am the vine." He now repeats the words. He would have us understand - note well the lesson, simple as it appears, it is the key of the abiding life - that the only way to obey the command, "Abide in me," is to have eye and heart fixed upon Himself. "Abide in me...I am the true vine." Yea, study this holy mystery until you see Christ as the true Vine, bearing, strengthening, supplying, inspiring all His branches, *being and doing in each branch all it needs*, and the abiding will come of itself. Yes, gaze upon Him as the true Vine, until you feel what a heavenly Mystery it is, and are compelled to ask the Father to reveal it to you by His Holy Spirit. He to whom God reveals the glory of the true Vine, he who sees what Jesus is and waits to do every moment, he cannot but abide. The vision of Christ is an irresistible attraction; it draws and holds us like a magnet. Listen ever to the living Christ still speaking to you, and waiting to show you the meaning and power of His Word: *"I am the vine."*

How much weary labor there has been in striving to understand what abiding is, how much fruitless effort in trying to attain it! Why was this? Because the attention was turned to the abiding as a work we have to do, instead of the living Christ, in whom we were to be kept abiding, who Himself was to hold and keep us. we thought of abiding as a continual strain and effort - we forget that it means rest from effort to one who has found the place of his abode. Do notice how Christ said, "Abide in Me; I am the Vine that brings forth, and holds, and strengthens, and makes fruitful the branches. Abide in Me, rest in Me, and let Me do My work. I am the true Vine, all I am, and speak, and do is divine truth, giving the actual reality of what is said. I am the Vine, only consent and yield thy all to Me, I will do all in thee."

And so it sometimes comes that souls who have never been specially occupied with the thought of abiding, are abiding all the time, because they are occupied with Christ. Not that the word *abide* is not needful; Christ used it so often, because it is the very key to the Christian life. But He would have us understand it in its true sense - "Come out of every other place, and every other trust and occupation, come out of self with its reasonings and efforts, come and rest in what I shall do. Live out of thyself; abide in Me. Know that thou art in Me; thou needest no more; remain there in Me."

"I am the Vine." Christ did not keep this mystery hidden from His disciples. He revealed it, first in words here, then in power when the Holy Spirit came down. He will reveal it to us too, first in the thoughts and confessions and desires these words awaken, then in power by the Spirit. Do let us wait on Him to show us all the heavenly meaning of the mystery. Let each day, in our quiet time, in the inner chamber with Him and His Word, our chief thought and aim be to get the heart fixed on Him, in the assurance: all that a vine ever can do for its branches, my Lord Jesus will do, is doing, for me. Give Him time, give Him your ear, that He may whisper and explain the divine secret: "I am the vine."

Above all, remember, Christ is the Vine of God's planting, and you are a branch of God's grafting. Ever stand before God, in Christ; ever wait for all grace from God, in Christ; ever yield yourself to bear the more fruit the

Husbandman asks, in Christ. And pray much for the revelation of the mystery that all the love and power of God that rested on Christ is working in you too. "I am God's Vine," Jesus says; "all I am I have from Him; all I am is for you; God will work it in you."

I am the Vine. Blessed Lord, speak Thou that word into my soul. Then shall I know that all Thy fullness is for me. And that I can count upon Thee to stream it into me, and that my abiding is so easy and so sure when I forget and lose myself in the adoring faith that the Vine holds the branch and supplies its every need.

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

YE THE BRANCHES

I Am The Vine, Ye Are the Branches - John 15.5

Christ had already said much of the branch; here He comes to the personal application: "Ye are the branches of whom I have been speaking. As I am the Vine, engaged to be and do all the branches need, so I now ask you, in the new dispensation of the Holy Spirit whom I have been promising you, to accept the place I give you, and to be My branches on earth." The relationship He seeks to establish is an intensely personal one: it all hinges on the two little words I and You. And it is for us as intensely personal as for the first disciples. Let us present ourselves before our Lord, until He speak to each of us in power, and our whole soul feels it: "I am the Vine; you are the branch."

Dear disciple of Jesus, however young or feeble, hear the voice. "You are the branch." You must be *nothing less.* Let no false humility, no carnal fear of sacrifice, no unbelieving doubts as to what you feel able for, keep you back from saying: "I will be a branch, with all that may mean - a branch, very feeble, but yet as like the Vine as can be, for I am of the same nature, and receive of the same spirit. A branch, utterly helpless, and yet just as manifestly set apart before God and men, as wholly given up to the work of bearing fruit, as the Vine itself. A branch, nothing in myself, and yet resting and rejoicing in the faith that knows that He will provide for all. Yes, by His grace, I will be nothing less than a branch, and all He means it to be, that through me, He may bring forth His fruit."

You are the branch. - You need be *nothing more.* You need not for one single moment of the day take upon you the responsibility of the Vine. You need not leave the place of entire dependence and unbounded confidence. You need, least of all, to be anxious as to how you are to understand the mystery, or fulfill its conditions, or work out its blessed aim. The Vine will give all and work all. The Father, the Husbandman, watches over your union with and growth in the Vine. You need be nothing more than a branch. Only a branch! Let that be your watchword; it will lead in the path of continual surrender to Christ's working, of true obedience to His every command, of joyful expectancy of all His grace.

Is there anyone who now asks: "How can I learn to say this aright, â€˜Only be a branch!' and to live it out?" Dear soul, the character of a branch, its strength, and the fruit it bears, depend entirely upon the Vine. And your life as branch depends entirely upon your apprehension of what our Lord Jesus is. Therefore never separate the two words: "I the Vine - you the branch." Your life and strength and fruit depend upon what your Lord Jesus is! Therefore worship and trust Him; let Him be your one desire and the one occupation of your heart. And when you feel that you do not and cannot know Him aright, then just remember it is part of His responsibility as Vine to make Himself known to you. He does this not in thoughts and conceptions - no - but in a hidden growth within the life that is humbly and restfully and entirely given up to wait on Him. The Vine reveals itself within the branch; thence comes the growth and fruit, Christ dwells and works within His branch; only be a branch, waiting on Him to do all; He will be to thee the true Vine. The Father Himself, the divine Husbandman, is able to make thee a branch worthy of the heavenly Vine. Thou shalt not be disappointed.

Ye are the branches. This word, too Lord! O speak it in power unto my soul. Let not the branch of the earthly

vine put me to shame, but as it only lives to bear the fruit of the vine, may my life on earth have no wish or aim, but to let Thee bring forth fruit through me.

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

MUCH FRUIT

He That Abideth in Me, and I in Him, the Same Bringeth Forth Much Fruit - John 15.5

Our Lord had spoken of fruit, more fruit. He now adds the thought: much fruit. There is in the Vine such fullness, the care of the divine Husbandman is so sure of success, that the much fruit is not a demand, but the simple promise of what must come to the branch that lives in the double abiding - he in Christ, and Christ in him. "The same bringeth forth much fruit." It is certain.

Have you ever noticed the difference in the Christian life between work and fruit? A machine can do work: only life can bear fruit. A law can compel work: only love can spontaneously bring forth fruit. Work implies effort and labor: the essential idea of fruit is that it is the silent natural restful produce of our inner life. The gardener may labor to give his apple tree the digging and manuring, the watering and the pruning it needs; he can do nothing to produce the apple: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, peace, joy." The healthy life bears much fruit. The connection between work and fruit is perhaps best seen in the expression, "fruitful in every good work." (Col. 1.10). It is only when good works come as the fruit of the indwelling Spirit that they are acceptable to God. Under the compulsion of law and conscience, or the influence of inclination and zeal, men may be most diligent in good works, and yet find that they have but little spiritual result. There can be no reason but this - their works are man's effort, instead of being the fruit of the Spirit, the restful, natural outcome of the Spirit's operation within us.

Let all workers come and listen to our holy Vine as He reveals the law of sure and abundant fruitfulness: "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." The gardener cares for one thing - the strength and healthy life of his tree: the fruit follows of itself. If you would bear fruit, see that the inner life is perfectly right, that your relation to Christ Jesus is clear and close. Begin each day with Him in the morning, to know in truth that you are abiding in Him and He in you. Christ tells that nothing less will do. It is not your willing and running, it is not by your might or strength, but - "by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Meet each new engagement, undertake every new work, with an ear and heart open to the Master's voice: "He that abideth in me, beareth much fruit." See you to the abiding; He will see to the fruit, for He will give it in you and through you.

O my brother, it is Christ must do all! The Vine provides the sap, and the life, and the strength: the branch waits, and rests, and receives, and bears the fruit. Oh, the blessedness of being only branches, through whom the Spirit flows and brings God's life to men!

I pray you, take time and ask the Holy Spirit to give you to realize the unspeakably solemn place you occupy in the mind of God. He has planted you into His Son with the calling and the power to bear *much fruit.* Accept that place. Look much to God, and to Christ, and expect joyfully to be what God has planned to make you, a fruitful branch.

Much fruit! So be it, blessed Lord Jesus. It can be, for Thou art the Vine. It shall be, for I am abiding in Thee. It must be, for Thy Father is the Husbandman that cleanses the branch. Yea, much fruit, out of the abundance of Thy grace.

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

YOU CAN DO NOTHING

Apart From Me Ye Can Do Nothing - John 15.5

In everything the life of the branch is to be the exact counterpart of that of the Vine. Of Himself Jesus had said: "The Son can do nothing of himself." As the outcome of that entire dependence, He could add: "All that the Father doeth, doeth the Son also likewise." As Son He did not receive His life from the Father once for all, but moment by moment. His life was a continual waiting on the Father for all He was to do. And so Christ says of His disciples: "Ye can do nothing apart from me." He means it literally. To everyone who wants to live the true disciple life, to bring forth fruit and glorify God, the message comes: You can do nothing. What had been said: "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit," is here enforced by the simplest and strongest of arguments: "Abiding in Me is indispensable, for, you know it, of yourselves you can do nothing to maintain or act out the heavenly life."

A deep conviction of the truth of this word lies at the very root of a strong spiritual life. As little as I created myself, as little as I could raise a man from the dead, can I give myself the divine life. As little as I can give it myself, can I maintain or increase it: every motion is the work of God through Christ and His Spirit. It is as a man believes this, that he will take up that position of entire and continual dependence which is the very essence of the life of faith. With the spiritual eye he sees Christ every moment supplying grace for every breathing and every deepening of the spiritual life. His whole heart says Amen to the word: You can do nothing. And just because he does so, he can also say: "I can do all things in Christ who strengtheneth me." The sense of helplessness, and the abiding to which it compels, leads to true fruitfulness and diligence in good works.

Apart from me ye can do nothing. - What a plea and what a call every moment to abide in Christ! We have only to go back to the vine to see how true it is. Look again at that little branch, utterly helpless and fruitless except as it receives sap from the vine, and learn that the full conviction of not being able to do anything apart from Christ is just what you need to teach you to abide in your heavenly Vine. It is this that is the great meaning of the pruning Christ spoke of - all that is self must be brought low, that our confidence may be in Christ alone. "Abide in me" - much fruit! "Apart from me" - nothing! Ought there to be any doubt as to what we shall choose?

The one lesson of the parable is - as surely, as naturally as the branch abides in the vine, *You can abide in Christ.* For this He is the true Vine; for this God is the Husbandman; for this you are a branch. Shall we not cry to God to deliver us forever from the "apart from me," and to make the "abide in me" an unceasing reality? Let your heart go out to what Christ is, and can do, to His divine power and His tender love to each of His branches, and you will say evermore confidently: "Lord! I am abiding; I will bear much fruit. My impotence is my strength. So be it. Apart from Thee, nothing. In Thee, much fruit."

Apart from Me - you nothing. Lord, I gladly accept the arrangement: I nothing - Thou all. My nothingness is my highest blessing, because Thou art the Vine, that givest and workest all. So be it, Lord! I, nothing, ever waiting on Thy fullness. Lord, reveal to me the glory of this blessed life.

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

WITHERED BRANCHES

If a Man Abide Not in Me, He is Cast Forth as a Branch, and is Withered; and They Gather Them, and Cast Them into the Fire, and They are Burned - John 15.6

The lessons these words teach are very simple and very solemn. A man can come to such a connection with Christ, that he counts himself to be in Him, and yet he can be cast forth. There is such a thing as not abiding in Christ, which leads to withering up and burning. There is such a thing as a withered branch, one in whom the initial union with Christ appears to have taken place, and in whom yet it is seen that his faith was but for a time. What a solemn call to look around and see if there be not withered branches in our churches, to look within and see whether we are indeed abiding and bearing fruit!

And what may be the cause of this "not abiding." With some it is that they never understood how the Christian calling leads to holy obedience and to loving service. They were content with the thought that they had believed, and were safe from Hell; there was neither motive nor power to abide in Christ - they knew not the need of it. With others it was that the cares of the world, or its prosperity, choked the Word: they had never forsaken all to follow Christ. With still others it was that their religion and their faith was in the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God. They trusted in the means of grace, or in their own sincerity, or in the soundness of their faith in justifying grace; they had never come even to seek an entire abiding in Christ as their only safety. No wonder that, when the hot winds of temptation or persecution blew, they withered away: they were not truly rooted in Christ.

Let us open our eyes and see if there be not withered branches all around us in the churches. Young men, whose confessions were once bright, but who are growing cold. Or old men, who have retained their profession, but out of whom the measure of life there once appeared to be has died out. Let ministers and believers take Christ's words to heart, and see, and ask the Lord whether there is nothing to be done for branches that are beginning to wither. And let the word *Abide* ring through the Church until every believer has caught it - no safety but in a true abiding in Christ.

Let each of us turn within. Is our life fresh, and green, and vigorous, bringing forth its fruit in its season? (See Ps. 1.3; 92.13, 14; Jer. 17.7, 8.) Let us accept every warning with a willing mind, and let Christ's "if a man abide not" give new urgency to His "abide in me." To the upright soul the secret of abiding will become ever simpler, just the consciousness of the place in which He has put me; just the childlike resting in my union with Him, and the trustful assurance that He will keep me. Oh, do let us believe there is a life that knows of no withering, that is ever green; and that brings forth fruit abundantly!

Withered! O my Father, watch over me, and keep me, and let nothing ever for a moment hinder the freshness that comes from a full abiding in the Vine. Let the very thought of a withered branch fill me with holy fear and watchfulness.

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

WHATSOEVER YE WILL

If Ye Abide in Me, and My Words Abide in You, Ask Whatsoever Ye Will, and it Shall be Done Unto You - John 15.7

The Whole place of the branch in the vine is one of unceasing prayer. Without intermission it is ever calling: "O my vine, send the sap I need to bear Thy fruit." And its prayers are never unanswered: it asks what it needs, what it will, and it is done.

The healthy life of the believer in Christ is equally one of unceasing prayer. Consciously or unconsciously, he lives in continual dependence. The Word of his Lord, "You can do nothing," has taught him that not more unbroken than the continuance of the branch in the vine, must be his asking and receiving. The promise of our text gives us infinite boldness: "Ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

The promise is given in direct connection with fruit-bearing. Limit it to yourself and your own needs, and you rob it of its power; you rob yourself of the power of appropriating it. Christ was sending these disciples out, and they were ready to give their life for the world; to them He gave the disposal of the treasures of Heaven. Their prayers would bring the Spirit and the power they needed for their work.

The promise is given in direct connection with the coming of the Spirit. The Spirit is not mentioned in the parable, just as little as the sap of the vine is mentioned. But both are meant all through. In the chapter preceding the parable, our Lord had spoken of the Holy Spirit, in connection with their inner life, being in them, and revealing Himself within them (14.15-23). In the next chapter He speaks of the Holy Spirit in connection with their work, coming to them, convincing the world, and glorifying Him (16.7-14). To avail ourselves of the unlimited prayer promises, we must be men who are filled with the Spirit, and wholly given up to the work and glory of Jesus. The Spirit will lead us into the truth of its meaning and the certainty of its fulfillment.

Let us realize that we can only fulfill our calling to bear much fruit, by praying much. In Christ are hid all the treasures men around us need; in Him all God's children are blessed with all spiritual blessings; He is full of grace and truth. But it needs prayer, much prayer, strong believing prayer, to bring these blessings down. And let us equally remember that we cannot appropriate the promise without a life given up for men. Many try to take the promise, and then look round for what they can ask. This is not the way; but the very opposite. Get the heart burdened with the need of souls, and the command to save them, and the power will come to claim the promise.

Let us claim it as one of the revelations of our wonderful life in the Vine: He tells us that if we ask in His name, in virtue of our union with Him, whatsoever it be, it will be done to us. Souls are perishing because there is too little prayer. God's children are feeble because there is too little prayer. We bear so little fruit because there is so little prayer. The faith of this promise would make us strong to pray; let us not rest till it has entered into our very heart, and drawn us in the power of Christ to continue and labor and strive in prayer until the blessing comes in power. To be a branch means not only bearing fruit on earth, but power in prayer to bring down blessing from

Heaven. Abiding fully means praying much.

Ask what ye will. O my Lord, why is it that our hearts are so little able to accept these words in their divine simplicity? Oh, give me to see that we need nothing less than this promise to overcome the powers of the world and Satan! Teach us to pray in the faith of this Thy promise.

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

IF YE ABIDE

If Ye Abide in Me, and My Words, Abide in You, Ask Whatsoever Ye Will, and it Shall be Done Unto You - John 15.7

The reason the Vine and its branches are such a true parable of the Christian life is that all nature has one source and breathes one spirit. The plant world was created to be to man an object lesson teaching him his entire dependence upon God, and his security in that dependence. He that clothes the lilies will much more cloth us. He that gives the trees and the vines their beauty and their fruits, making each what He meant it to be, will much more certainly make us what He would have us to be. The only difference is what God works in the trees is by a power of which they are not conscious. He wants to work in us with our consent. This is the nobility of man, that he has a will that can cooperate with God in understanding and approving and accepting what He offers to do.

If ye abide - Here is the difference between the branch of the natural and the branch of the spiritual Vine. The former abides by force of nature: the latter abides, not by force of will, but by a divine power given to the consent of the will. Such is the wonderful provision God has made that, what the power of nature does in the one case, the power of grace will do in the other. The branch can abide in the Vine.

If ye abide in me...ask whatsoever ye will - If we are to live a true prayer life, with the love and the power and the experience of prayer marking it, there must be no question about the abiding. And if we abide, there need be no question about the liberty of asking what we will, and the certainty of its being done. There is the one condition: "If ye abide in me." There must be no hesitation about the possibility or the certainty of it. We must gaze on that little branch and its wonderful power of bearing such beautiful fruit until we truly learn to abide.

And what is its secret? Be wholly occupied with Jesus. Sink the roots of your being in faith and love and obedience deep down into Him. Come away out of every other place to abide here. Give up everything for the inconceivable privilege of being a branch on earth of the glorified Son of God in Heaven. Let Christ be first. Let Christ be all. Do not be occupied with the abiding - be occupied with Christ! He will hold you, He will keep you abiding in Him. He will abide in you.

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you - This He gives as the equivalent of the other expression: "I in you. If my words abide in you" - that is, not only in meditation, in memory, in love, in faith - all these words enter into your will, your being, and constitute your life - if they transform your character into their own likeness, and you become and are what they speak and mean - ask what ye will; it shall be done unto you. Your words to God in prayer will be the fruit of Christ and His words living in you.

Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you - Believe in the truth of this promise. Set yourself to be an intercessor for men; a fruit-bearing intercessor, ever calling down more blessing. Such faith and prayer will help you wonderfully to abide wholly and unceasingly.

If ye abide. Yes, Lord, the power to pray and the power to prevail must depend on this abiding in Thee. As Thou art the Vine, Thou art the divine Intercessor, who breathest Thy spirit in us. Oh, for grace to abide simply and

wholly in Thee, and ask great things!

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

THE FATHER GLORIFIED

Herein is My Father Glorified, that Ye Bear Much Fruit - John 15.8

How can we glorify God? Not by adding to His glory or bringing Him any new glory that He has not. But simply by allowing His glory to shine out through us, by yielding ourselves to Him, that His glory may manifest itself in us and through us to the world. In a vineyard or a vine bearing much fruit, the owner is glorified, as it tells of his skill and care. In the disciple who bears much fruit, the Father is glorified. Before men and angels, proof is given of the glory of God's grace and power; God's glory shines out through him.

This is what Peter means when he writes: "He that ministers, let him minister as of the ability that God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ." As a man works and serves in a power which comes from God alone, God gets all the glory. When we confess that the ability came from God alone, he that does the work, and they who see it, equally glorify God. It was God who did it. Men judge by the fruit of a garden of what the gardener is. Men judge of God by the fruit that the branches of the Vine of His planting bears. Little fruit brings little glory to God. It brings no honor to either the Vine or the Husbandman. "That ye bear much fruit, herein is my Father glorified."

We have sometimes mourned our lack of fruit, as a loss to ourselves and our fellow men, with complaints of our feebleness as the cause. Let us rather think of the sin and shame of little fruit as robbing God of the glory He ought to get from us. Let us learn the secret of bringing glory to God, serving of the ability which God giveth. The full acceptance of Christ's Word, "You can do nothing"; the simple faith in God, who worketh all in all; the abiding in Christ through whom the divine Husbandman does His work and gets much fruit - this is the life that will bring glory to God.

Much fruit - God asks it; see that you give it. God can be content with nothing less; be you content with nothing less. Let these words of Christ - fruit, more fruit, much fruit - abide in you, until you think as He does, and you be prepared to take from Him, the heavenly Vine, what He has for you. Much fruit: herein is my Father glorified. Let the very height of the demand be your encouragement. It is so entirely beyond your power, that it throws you more entirely upon Christ, your true Vine. He can, He will, make it true in you.

Much fruit - God asks because he needs. He does not ask fruit from the branches of His Vine for show, to prove what He can do. No; He needs it for the salvation of men: it is in that He is to be glorified. Throw yourself in much prayer on your Vine and your Husbandman. Cry to God and your Father to give you fruit to bring to men. Take the burden of the hungry and the perishing on you, as Jesus did when He was moved with compassion, and your power in prayer, and your abiding, and your bearing much fruit to the glory of the Father will have a reality and a certainty you never knew before.

The Father glorified. Blessed prospect - God glorifying Himself in me, showing forth the glory of His goodness and power in what He works in me, and through me. What a motive to bear much fruit, just as much as He works in me! Father, glorify Thyself in me.

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

TRUE DISCIPLES

Herein is My Father Glorified, that Ye Bear Much Fruit: So Shall Ye Be My Disciples - John 15.8

And are those who do not bear much fruit not disciples? They may be, but in a backward and immature stage. Of those who bear much fruit, Christ says: "These are My disciples, such as I would have them be - these are true disciples." Just as we say of someone in whom the idea of manliness is realized: That is a man! So our Lord tells who are disciples after His heart, worthy of the name: Those who bear much fruit. We find this double sense of the word *disciple* in the Gospel. Sometimes it is applied to all who accepted Christ's teaching. At other times it includes only the inner circle of those who followed Christ wholly, and gave themselves to His training for service. The difference has existed throughout all ages. There have always been a smaller number of God's people who have sought to serve Him with their whole heart, while the majority have been content with a very small measure of the knowledge of His grace and will.

And what is the difference between this smaller inner circle and the many who do not seek admission to it? We find it in the words: *much fruit.* With many Christians the thought of personal safety, which at their first awakening was a legitimate one, remains to the end the one aim of their religion. The idea of service and fruit is always a secondary and very subordinate one. The honest longing for much fruit does not trouble them. Souls that have heard the call to live wholly for their Lord, to give their life for Him as He gave His for them, can never be satisfied with this. Their cry is to bear as much fruit as they possibly can, as much as their Lord ever can desire or give in them.

Bear much fruit: so shall ye be My disciples - Let me beg every reader to consider these words most seriously. Be not content with the thought of gradually doing a little more or better work. In this way it may never come. Take the words, *much fruit,* as the revelation of your heavenly Vine of what you must be, of what you can be. Accept fully the impossibility, the utter folly of attempting it in your strength. Let the words call you to look anew upon the Vine, an undertaking to live out its heavenly fullness in you. Let them waken in you once again the faith and the confession: "I am a branch of the true Vine; I can bear much fruit to His glory, and the glory of the Father."

We need not judge others. But we see in God's Word everywhere two classes of disciples. Let there be no hesitation as to where we take our place. Let us ask Him to reveal to us how He ask and claims a life wholly given up to Him, to be as full of His Spirit as He can make us. Let our desire be nothing less than perfect cleansing, unbroken abiding, closest communion, abundant fruitfulness - true branches of the true Vine.

The world is perishing, the church is failing, Christ's cause is suffering, Christ is grieving on account of the lack of wholehearted Christians, bearing much fruit. Though you scarce see what it implies or how it is to come, say to Him that you are His branch to bear much fruit; that you are ready to be His disciple in His own meaning of the word.

My disciples. Blessed Lord, much fruit is the proof that Thou the true Vine hast in me a true branch, a disciple wholly at Thy disposal. Give me, I pray Thee, the childlike consciousness that my fruit is pleasing to Thee, what Thou countest much fruit.

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

THE WONDERFUL LOVE

Even as the Father Hath Loved Me, I Also Have Loved you - John 15.9

Here Christ leaves the language of parable, and speaks plainly out of the Father. Much as the parable could teach, it could not teach the lesson of love. All that the vine does for the branch, it does under the compulsion of a law of nature: there is no personal living love to the branch. We are in danger of looking to Christ as a Saviour and a supplier of every need, appointed by God, accepted and trusted by us, without any sense of the intensity of personal affection in which Christ embraces us, and our life alone can find its true happiness. Christ seeks to point us to this.

And how does He do so? He leads us once again to Himself, to show us how identical His own life is with ours. Even as the Father loved Him, He loves us. His life as vine dependent on the Father was a life in the Father's love; that love was His strength and His joy; in the power of that divine love resting on Him He lived and died. If we are to live like Him, as branches to be truly like our Vine, we must share in this too. *Our life must have its breath and being in a heavenly love as much as His.* What the Father's love was to Him, His love will be to us. If that love made Him the true Vine, His love can make us true branches. "Even as the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you."

Even as the Father hath loved Me - And how did the Father love Him? The infinite desire and delight of God to communicate to the Son all He had Himself, to take the Son into the most complete equality with Himself, to live in the Son and have the Son live in Him - this was the love of God to Christ. It is a mystery of glory of which we can form no conception, we can only bow and worship as we try to think of it. And with such a love, with this very same love, Christ longs in an infinite desire and delight to communicate to us all He is and has, to make us partakers of His own nature and blessedness, to live in us and have us live in Himself.

And now, if Christ loves us with such an intense, such an infinite divine love, what is it that hinders it triumphing over every obstacle and getting full possession of us? The answer is simple. Even as the love of the Father to Christ, so His love to us is a divine mystery, too high for us to comprehend or attain to by any effort of our own. It is only the Holy Spirit who can shed abroad and reveal in its all-conquering power without intermission this wonderful love of God in Christ. It is the vine itself that must give the branch its growth and fruit by sending up its sap. It is Christ Himself must by His Holy Spirit dwell in the heart; then shall we know and have in us the love that passeth knowledge.

As the Father loved Me, so have I loved you - Shall we not draw near to the personal living Christ, and trust Him, and yield all to Him, that He may love this love into us? Just as he knew and rejoiced every hour - the Father loveth Me - we too may live in the unceasing consciousness - as the Father loved Him, so He loves me.

As the Father loved Me, so have I loved you. Dear Lord, I am only beginning to apprehend how exactly the life of the Vine is to be that of the branch too. Thou art the Vine, because the Father loved Thee, and poured His love through Thee. And so Thou lovest me, and my life as branch is to be like Thine, a receiving and a giving out of heavenly love.

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

ABIDE IN MY LOVE

Even as the Father Hath Loved Me, I Also Have Loved You: Abide Ye in My Love - John 15.9

Abide in My love - We speak of a man's home as his abode. Our abode, the home of our soul, is to be the love of Christ. We are to live our life there, to be at home there all the day: this is what Christ means our life to be, and really can make it. Our continuous abiding in the Vine is to be an abiding in His love.

You have probably heard or read of what is called the higher, or the deeper life, of the richer or the fuller life, of the life abundant. And you possibly know that some have told of a wonderful change, by which their life of continual failure and stumbling had been changed into a very blessed experience of being kept and strengthened and made exceeding glad. If you asked them how it was this great blessing came to them, many would tell you it was simply this, that they were led to believe that this abiding in Christ's love was meant to be a reality, and that they were made willing to give up everything for it, and then enabled to trust Christ to make it true to them.

The love of the Father to the Son is not a sentiment - it is a divine life, an infinite energy, an irresistible power. It carried Christ through life and death and the grave. The Father loved Him and dwelt in Him, and did all for Him. So the love of Christ to us too is an infinite living power that will work in us all He delights to give us. The feebleness of our Christian life is that we do not take time to believe that this divine love does really delight in us, and will possess and work all in us. We do not take time to look at the Vine bearing the branch so entirely, working all in it so completely. We strive to do for ourselves what Christ alone can, what Christ, oh, so lovingly, longs to do for us.

And this now is the secret of the change we spoke of, and the beginning of a new life, when the soul sees this infinite love willing to do all, and gives itself up to it. "Abide ye in my love." To believe that, it is possible so to live moment by moment; to believe that everything that makes it difficult or impossible will be overcome by Christ Himself; to believe that Love really means an infinite longing to give itself wholly to us and never leave us; and in this faith to cast ourselves on Christ to work it in us; this is the secret of the true Christian life.

And how to come to this faith? Turn away from the visible if you would see and possess the invisible. Take more time with Jesus, gazing on Him as the heavenly Vine, living in the love of the Father, wanting you to live in His love. Turn away from yourself and your efforts and your faith, if you would have the heart filled with Him and the certainty of His love. Abiding means going out from everything else, to occupy one place and stay there. Come away from all else, and set your heart on Jesus, and His love, that love will waken your faith and strengthen it. Occupy yourself with that love, worship it, wait for it. You may be sure it will reach out to you, and by its power take you up into itself as your abode and your home.

Abide in My love. Lord Jesus, I see it, it was Thy abiding in Thy Father's love that made Thee the true Vine, with Thy divine fullness of love and blessing for us. Oh, that I may even so, as a branch, abide in Thy love, for its fullness to fill me and overflow on all around.

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

OBEY AND ABIDE

If Ye Keep My Commandments, Ye Shall Abide In My Love - John 15.10

In our former meditation reference was made to the entrance into a life of rest and strength which has often come through a true insight into the personal love of Christ, and the assurance that that love indeed meant that He would keep the soul. In connection with that transition, and the faith that sees and accepts it, the word *surrender* or *consecration* is frequently used. The soul sees that it cannot claim the keeping of this wonderful love unless it yields itself to a life of entire obedience. It sees too that the faith that can trust Christ for keeping from sinning must prove its sincerity by venturing at once to trust Him for strength to obey. In that faith it dares to give up and cut off everything that has hitherto hindered it, and to promise and expect to live a life that is well pleasing to God.

This is the thought we have here now in our Saviour's teaching. After having in the words, "Abide in my love," spoken of a life in His love as a necessity, because it is at once a possibility and an obligation, He states what its one condition is: *"If ye keep my commandments,* ye shall abide in my love." This is surely not meant to close the door to the abode of His love which he had just opened up. Not in the most distant way does it suggest the thought which some are too ready to entertain, that as we cannot keep His commandments, we cannot abide in His love. No; the precept is a promise: "Abide in my love," could not be a precept if it were not a promise. And so the instruction as to the way through this open door points to no unattainable ideal; the love that invites to her blessed abode reaches out the hand, and enables us to keep the commandments. Let us not fear, in the strength of our ascended Lord, to take the vow of obedience, and give ourselves to the keeping of His commandments. Through His will, loved and done, lies the path to His love.

Only let us understand well what it means. It refers to our performance of all that we know to be God's will. There may be things doubtful, of which we are not sure. A sin of ignorance has still the nature of sin in it. There may be involuntary sins, which rise up in the flesh, which we cannot control or overcome. With regard to these God will deal in due tome in the way of searching and humbling, and if we be simple and faithful, give us larger deliverance than we dare expect. But all this may be found in a truly obedient soul. Obedience has reference to the positive keeping of the commandments of our Lord, and the performance of His will in everything in which we know it. This is a possible degree of grace, and it is the acceptance in Christ's strength of such obedience as the purpose of our heart, of which our Saviour speaks here. Faith in Christ as our Vine, in His enabling and sanctifying power, fits us for this obedience of faith, and secures a life of abiding in His love.

If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love - It is the heavenly Vine unfolding the mystery of the life He gives. It is to those abiding in Him to whom He opens up the secret of the full abiding in His love. *It is the wholehearted surrender in everything to do His will, that gives access to a life in the abiding enjoyment of His love.*

Obey and abide. Gracious Lord, teach me this lesson, that it is only through knowing Thy will one can know Thy heart, and only through doing that *will* one can abide in Thy love. Lord, teach me that as worthless as is the doing in my own strength, so essential and absolutely indispensable is the doing of faith in Thy strength, if I would abide in Thy love.

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

YE, EVEN AS I

If Ye Keep My Commandments, Ye Shall Abide in My Love, Even as I have Kept My Father's Commandments, and Abide in His Love - John 15.10

We have had occasion more than once to speak of the perfect similarity of the vine and the branch in nature, and therefore in aim. Here Christ speaks no longer in a parable, but tells us plainly out of how His own life is the exact model of ours. He had said that it is alone by obedience we can abide in His love. He now tells that this was the way in which He abode in the Father's love. As the Vine, so the branch. His life and strength and joy had been in the love of the Father: it was only by obedience He abode in it. We may find our life and strength and joy in His love all the day, but it is only by an obedience like His we can abide in it. Perfect conformity to the Vine is one of the most precious of the lessons of the branch. It was by obedience Christ as Vine honored the Father as Husbandman; it is by obedience the believer as branch honors Christ as Vine.

Obey and abide - That was the law of Christ's life as much as it is to be that of ours. He was made like us in all things, that we might be like Him in all things. He opened up a path in which we may walk even as He walked. He took our human nature to teach us how to wear it, and show us how obedience, as it is the first duty of the creature, is the only way to abide in the favor of God and enter into His glory. And now He comes to instruct and encourage us, and asks us to keep His commandments, even as He kept His Father's commandments and abides in His love.

The divine fitness of this connection between obeying and abiding, between God's commandments and His love, is easily seen. God's will is the very center of His divine perfection. As revealed in His commandments, it opens up the way for the creature to grow into the likeness of the Creator. In accepting and doing His will, I rise into fellowship with Him. Therefore it was that the Son, when coming into the world, spoke: "I come to do thy will, O God"! This was the place and this would be the blessedness of the creature. This was what he had lost in the Fall. This was what Christ came to restore. This is what, as the heavenly Vine, He asks of us and imparts to us, that even as He by keeping His Father's commandments abode in His love, we should keep His commandments and abide in His love.

Ye, even as I - The branch cannot bear fruit except as it has exactly the same life as the Vine. Our life is to be the exact counterpart of Christ's life. It can be, just in such measure as we believe in Him as the Vine, imparting Himself and His life to His branches. "Ye, even as I," the Vine says: one law, one nature, one fruit. Do let us take from our Lord the lesson of obedience as the secret of abiding. Let us confess that simple, implicit, universal obedience has taken too little the place it should have. Christ died for us as enemies, when we were disobedient. He took us up into His love; now that we are in Him, His Word is: "Obey and abide; ye, even as I." Let us give ourselves to a willing and loving obedience. He will keep us abiding in His love.

Ye, even as I. O my blessed Vine, who makest the branch in everything partake of Thy life and likeness, in this too I am to be like Thee: as Thy life in the Father's love through obedience, so mine in Thy love! Saviour, help me, that obedience may indeed be the link between Thee and me.

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

JOY

These Things Have I Spoken Unto You, That My Joy May Be in You, and That Your Joy May Be Fulfilled - John 15.11

If any one asks the question, "How can I be a happy Christian?" our Lord's answer is very simple: "These things," about the Vine and the branches, "I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be fulfilled." "You cannot have My joy without My life. Abide in Me, and let Me abide in you, and My joy will be in you." All healthy life is a thing of joy and beauty; live undividedly the branch life; you will have His joy in full measure.

To many Christians the thought of a life wholly abiding in Christ is one of strain and painful effort. They cannot see that the strain and effort only come, as long as we do not yield ourselves unreservedly to the life of Christ in us. The very first words of the parable are not yet opened up to them: "I am the true Vine; I undertake all and provide for all; I ask nothing of the branch but that it yields wholly to Me, and allows Me to do all. *I engage to make and keep the branch all that it ought to be."* Ought it not to be an infinite and unceasing joy to have the Vine thus work all, and to know that it is none less than the blessed Son of God in His love who is each moment bearing us and maintaining our life?

That My joy may be in you - We are to have Christ's own joy in us. And what is Christ's own joy? There is no joy like love. There is no joy but love. Christ had just spoken of the Father's love and His own abiding in it, and of His having loved us with that same love. His joy is nothing but the joy of love, of being loved and of loving. It was the joy of receiving His Father's love and abiding in it, and then the joy of passing on that love and pouring it out on sinners. It is this joy He wants us to share: the joy of being loved of the Father and of Him; the joy of in our turn loving and living for those around us. This is just the joy of being truly branches: abiding in His love, and then giving up ourselves in love to bear fruit for others. Let us accept His life, as He gives it in us as the Vine, His joy will be ours: the joy of abiding in His love, the joy of loving like Him, of loving with His love.

And that your joy may be fulfilled - That it may be complete, that you may be filled with it. How sad that we should so need to be reminded that as God alone is the fountain of all joy, "God our exceeding joy," the only way to be perfectly happy is to have as much of God, as much of His will and fellowship, as possible! Religion is meant to be in everyday life a thing of unspeakable joy. And why do so many complain that it is not so? Because they do not believe that there is no joy like the joy of abiding in Christ and in His love, and being branches through whom He can pour out His love on a dying world.

Oh, that Christ's voice might reach the heart of every young Christian, and persuade him to believe that His joy is the only true joy, that His joy can become ours and truly fill us, and that the sure and simple way of living in it is - only this - to abide as branches in Him our heavenly Vine. Let the truth enter deep into us - as long as our joy is not full, it is a sign that we do not yet know our heavenly Vine aright; every desire for a fuller joy must only urge us to abide more simply and more fully in His love.

My joy - your joy. In this too it is: as the Vine, so the branch; all the Vine in the branch. Thy joy is our joy - Thy

joy in us, and our joy fulfilled. Blessed Lord, fill me with Thy joy - the joy of being loved and blessed with a divine love; the joy of loving and blessing others.

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

This is My Commandment, That Ye Love One Another - John 15.12

God is love. His whole nature and perfection is love, living not for Himself, but to dispense life and blessing. In His love He begat the Son, that He might give all to Him. In His love He brought forth creatures that He might make them partakers of His blessedness.

Christ is the Son of God's love, the bearer, the revealer, the communicator of that love. His life and death were all love. Love is His life, and the life He gives. He only lives to love, to live out His life of love in us, to give Himself in all who will receive Him. The very first thought of the true Vine is love - living only to impart His life to the branches.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of love. He cannot impart Christ's life without imparting His love. Salvation is nothing but love conquering and entering into us; we have just as much of salvation as we have of love. Full salvation is perfect love.

No wonder that Christ said: "A new commandment I give unto you"; "This is my commandment" - the one all-inclusive commandment - "that ye love one another." The branch is not only one with the vine, but with all its other branches; they drink one spirit, they form one body, they bear one fruit. Nothing can be more unnatural than that Christians should not love one another, even as Christ loved them. The life they received from their heavenly Vine is nothing but love. This is the one thing He asks above all others. "Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples...love one another." As the special sort of vine is known by the fruit it bears, the nature of the heavenly Vine is to be judged of by the love His disciples have to one another.

See that you obey this commandment. Let your "obey and abide" be seen in this. Love your brethren as the way to abide in the love of your Lord. Let your vow of obedience begin here. Love one another. Let your intercourse with the Christians in your own family be holy, tender, Christlike love. Let your thoughts of the Christians round you be, before everything, in the spirit of Christ's love. Let your life and conduct be the sacrifice of love - give your self up to think of their sins or their needs, to intercede for them, to help and to serve them. Be in your church or circle the embodiment of Christ's love. The life Christ lives in you is love; let the life in which you live it out be all love.

But, man, you write as if all this was so natural and simple and easy. Is it at all possible thus to live and thus to love? My answer is: Christ commands it: you must obey. Christ means it: you must obey, or you cannot abide in His love.

But I have tried and failed. I see no prospect of living like Christ. Ah! that is because you have failed to take in the first word of the parable - "I am the true Vine: I give all you need as a branch, I give all I myself have." I pray you, let the sense of past failure and present feebleness drive you to the Vine. He is all love. He loves to give. He gives love. He will teach you to love, even as He loved.

Love one another. Dear Lord Jesus, Thou art all love; the life Thou gavest us is love; Thy new commandment, and Thy badge of discipleship is, "Love one another." I accept the charge: with the love with which Thou lovest me, and I love Thee, I will love my brethren.

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

EVEN AS I HAVE LOVED YOU

This is My Commandment, That Ye Love One Another, Even as I Have Loved You - John 15.12

This is the second time our Lord uses the expression - *Even as I.* The first time it was of His relation to the Father, keeping His commandments, and abiding in His love. Even so we are to keep Christ's commandments, and abide in His love. The second time He speaks of His relation to us as the rule of our love to our brethren: "Love one another, as I have loved you." In each case His disposition and conduct is to be the law for ours. It is again the truth we have more than once insisted on - perfect likeness between the Vine and the branch.

Even as I - But is it not a vain thing to imagine that we can keep His commandments, and love the brethren, even as He kept His Father's, and as He loved us? And must not the attempt end in failure and discouragement? Undoubtedly, if we seek to carry out the injunction in our strength, or without a full apprehension of the truth of the Vine and its branches. But if we understand that the "even as I" is just the one great lesson of the parable, the one continual language of the Vine to the branch, we shall see that it is not the question of what we feel able to accomplish, but of what Christ is able to work in us. These high and holy commands - "Obey, even as I! Love, even as I" - are just meant to bring us to the consciousness of our impotence, and through that to waken us to the need and the beauty and the sufficiency of what is provided for us in the Vine. We shall begin to hear the Vine speaking every moment to the branch: "Even as I. Even as I: My life is your life; and have a share in all My fullness; the Spirit in you, and the fruit that comes from you, is all just the same as in Me. Be not afraid, but let your faith grasp each "Even as I" as the divine assurance that because I live in you, you may and can live like Me."

But why, if this really be the meaning of the parable, if this really be the life a branch may live,who do so few realize it? Because they do not know the heavenly mystery of the Vine. They know much of the parable and its beautiful lessons. But the hidden spiritual mystery of the Vine in His divine omnipotence and nearness, bearing and supplying them all the day - this they do not know, because they have not waited on God's Spirit to reveal it to them.

Love one another, even as I have loved you - "Ye, even as I." How are we to begin if we are really to learn the mystery? With the confession that we need to be brought to an entirely new mode of life, because we have never yet known Christ as the Vine in the completeness of His quickening and transforming power. With the surrender to be cleansed from all that is of self, and detached from all that is in the world, to live only and wholly as Christ lived for the glory of the Father. And then with the faith that this "even as I" is in very deed what Christ is ready to make true, the very life the Vine will maintain in the branch wholly dependent upon Him.

Even as I. Ever again it is, my blessed Lord, as the Vine, so the branch - one life, one spirit, one obedience, one joy, one love.

Lord Jesus, *in the faith that Thou art my Vine, and that I am Thy branch,* I accept Thy command as a promise, and take Thy "even as I" as the simple revelation of what Thou dost work in me. Yea, Lord, as Thou hast loved, I will love.

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

CHRIST'S FRIENDSHIP: ITS ORIGIN

Greater Love Hath No Man Than This, That a Man Lay Down His Life for His Friends - John 15.13

In the three following verses our Lord speaks of His relation to His disciples under a new aspect - that of friendship. He point us to the love in which it on His side has its origin (v.13): to the obedience on our part by which it is maintained (v.14); and then to the holy intimacy to which it leads (v.15).

Our relation to Christ is one of love. In speaking of this previously, He showed us what His love was in its heavenly glory; the same love with which the Father had loved Him. Here we have it in its earthly manifestation - lay down His life for us. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Christ does indeed long to have us know that the secret root and strength of all He is and does for us as the Vine is love. As we learn to believe this, we shall feel that here is something which we not only need to think and know about, but a living power, a divine life which we need to receive within us. Christ and His love are inseparable; they are identical. God is love, and Christ is love. God and Christ and the divine love can only be known by having them, by their life and power working within us. "This is eternal life, that they know thee"; there is no knowing God but by having the life; the life working in us alone gives the knowledge. And even so the love; if we would know it, we must drink of its living stream, we must have it shed forth by the Holy Spirit in us.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man give his life for his friends." The life is the most precious thing a man has; the life is all he is; the life is himself. This is the highest measure of love: when a man gives his life, he hold nothing back, he gives all he has and is. It is this our Lord Jesus wants to make clear to us concerning His mystery of the Vine; with all He has He has placed Himself at our disposal. He wants us to count Him our very own; He wants to be wholly our possession, that we may be wholly His possession. He gave His life for us in death not merely as a passing act, that when accomplished was done with; no, but as a making Himself ours for eternity. Life for life; He gave His life for us to possess that we might give our life for Him to possess. This is what is taught by the parable of the Vine and the branch, in their wonderful identification, in their perfect union.

It is as we know something of this, not by reason or imagination, but deep down in the heart and life, that we shall begin to see what ought to be our life as branches of the heavenly Vine. He gave Himself to death; He lost Himself, that we might find life in Him. This is the true Vine, who only lives to live in us. This is the beginning and the root of that holy friendship to which Christ invites us.

Great is the mystery of godliness! Let us confess our ignorance and unbelief. Let us cease from our own understanding and our own efforts to master it. Let us wait for the Holy Spirit who dwells within us to reveal it. Let us trust His infinite love, which gave its life for us, to take possession and rejoice in making us wholly its own.

His life for His friends. How wonderful the lessons of the Vine, giving its very life to its branches! And Jesus gave His life for His friends. And that love gives itself to them and in them. My heavenly Vine, oh, teach me how wholly Thou longest to live in me!

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

CHRIST'S FRIENDSHIP: ITS EVIDENCE

Ye Are My Friends, if Ye Do the Things Which I Command You - John 15.14

Our Lord has said what He gave as proof of His friendship: He gave His life for us. He now tells us what our part is to be - to do the things which He commands. He gave His life to secure a place for His love in our hearts to rule us; the response His love calls us to, and empowers us for, is that we do what He commands us. As we know the dying love, we shall joyfully obey its commands. As we obey the commands, we shall know the love more fully. Christ had already said: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love." He counts it needful to repeat the truth again: the one proof of our faith in His love, the one way to abide in it, the one mark of being true branches is - to do the things which He commands us. He began with absolute surrender of His life for us. He can ask nothing less from us. This alone is a life in His friendship.

This truth, of the imperative necessity of obedience, doing all that Christ commands us, has not the place in our Christian teaching and living that Christ meant it to have. We have given a far higher place to privilege than to duty. We have not considered implicit obedience as a condition of true discipleship. The secret thought that it is impossible to do the things He commands us, and that therefore it cannot be expected of us, and a subtle and unconscious feeling that sinning is a necessity have frequently robbed both precepts and promises of their power. The whole relation to Christ has become clouded and lowered, the waiting on His teaching, the power to hear and obey His voice, and through obedience to enjoy His love and friendship, have been enfeebled by the terrible mistake. Do let us try to return to the true position, take Christ's words as most literally true, and make nothing less the law of our life: "Ye are my friends, if ye do the things that I command you." Surely our Lord asks nothing less than that we heartily and truthfully say: "Yea, Lord, what Thou dost command, that will I do."

These commands are to be done as a proof of friendship. The power to do them rests entirely in the personal relationship to Jesus. For a friend I could do what I would not for another. The friendship of Jesus is so heavenly and wonderful, it comes to us so as the power of a divine love entering in and taking possession, the unbroken fellowship with Himself is so essential to it, that it implies and imparts a joy and a love which make the obedience a delight. The liberty to claim the friendship of Jesus, the power to enjoy it, the grace to prove it in all its blessedness - all come as we do the things He commands us.

Is not the one thing needful for us that we ask our Lord to reveal Himself to us in the dying love in which He proved Himself our friend, and then listen as He says to us: "Ye are My friends." As we see what our Friend has done for us, and what as unspeakable blessedness it is to have Him call us friends, the doing His commands will become the natural fruit of our life in his love. We shall not fear to say: "Yea, Lord, we are Thy friends, and do what Thou dost command us."

If ye do. Yes, it is in doing that we are blessed, that we abide in His love, that we enjoy His friendship. "If ye do what I command you!" O my Lord, let Thy holy friendship lead me into the love of all Thy commands, and let the doing of Thy commands lead me ever deeper into Thy friendship.

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

CHRIST'S FRIENDSHIP: ITS INTIMACY

No Longer Do I Call You Servants; for the Servant Knoweth Not What His Lord Doeth: But I Have Called You Friends; for All Things That I Heard From My Father, I Have Made Known Unto You - John 15.15

The highest proof of true friendship, and one great source of its blessedness, is the intimacy that holds nothing back, and admits the friend to share our inmost secrets. It is a blessed thing to be Christ's servant; His redeemed ones delight to call themselves His slaves. Christ had often spoken of the disciples as His servants. In His great love our Lord now says: "No longer do I call you servants"; with the coming of the Holy Spirit a new era was to be inaugurated. "The servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth" - he has to obey without being consulted or admitted into the secret of all his master's plans. "But, I have called you friends, for all things I heard from my Father I have made known unto you." Christ's friends share with Him in all the secrets the Father has entrusted to Him.

Let us think what this means. When Christ spoke of keeping His Father's commandments, He did not mean merely what was written in Holy Scripture, but those special commandments which were communicated to Him day by day, and from hour to hour. It was of these He said: "The Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that he doeth, and he will show him greater things." All that Christ did was God's working. God showed it to Christ, so that He carried out the Father's will and purpose, not, as man often does, blindly and unintelligently, but with full understanding and approval. As one who stood in God's counsel, He knew God's plan.

And this now is the blessedness of being Christ's friends, that we do not, as servants, do His will without much spiritual insight into its meaning and aim, but are admitted, as an inner circle, into some knowledge of God's more secret thoughts. From the Day of Pentecost on, by the Holy Spirit, Christ was to lead His disciples into the spiritual apprehension of the mysteries of the kingdom, of which He had hitherto spoken only by parables.

Friendship delights in fellowship. Friends hold council. Friends dare trust to each other what they would not for anything have others know. What is it that gives a Christian access to this holy intimacy with Jesus? That gives him the spiritual capacity for receiving the communications Christ has to make of what the Father has shown Him? "Ye are my friends if ye do what I command you." It is loving obedience that purifies the soul. That refers not only to the commandments of the Word, but to that blessed application of the Word to our daily life, which none but our Lord Himself can give. But as these are waited for in dependence and humility, and faithfully obeyed, the soul becomes fitted for ever closer fellowship, and the daily life may become a continual experience: "I have called you friends; for all things I have heard from my Father, I have made known unto you."

I have called you friends. What an unspeakable honor! What a heavenly privilege! O Saviour, speak the word with power into my soul: "I have called you My friend, whom I love, whom I trust, to whom I make known all that passes between my Father and Me."

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

ELECTION

Ye Did Not Choose Me, But I Chose You, and Appointed You That Ye Should Go and Bear Fruit - John 15.16

The branch does not choose the vine, or decide on which vine it will grow. The vine brings forth the branch, as and where it will. Even so Christ says: "Ye did not choose me, but I chose you." But some will say is not just this the difference between the branch in the natural and in the spiritual world, that man has a will and a power of choosing, and that it is in virtue of his having decided to accept Christ, his having chosen Him as Lord, that he is now a branch? This is undoubtedly true. And yet it is only half a truth. The lesson of the Vine, and the teaching of our Lord, points to the other half, the deeper, the divine side of our being in Christ. If He had not chosen us, we had never chosen Him. Our choosing Him was the result of His choosing us, and taking hold of us. In the very nature of things, it is His prerogative as Vine to choose and create His own branch. We owe all we are to "the election of grace." If we want to know Christ as the true Vine, the sole origin and strength of the branch life, and ourselves as branches in our absolute, most blessed, and most secure dependence upon Him, let us drink deep of this blessed truth: "Ye did not choose me, but I chose you."

And with what view does Christ say this? That they may know what the object is for which He chose them, and find, in their faith in His election, the certainty of fulfilling their destiny. Throughout Scripture this is the great object of the teaching of election. "Predestinated to be conformed to the image of his son." (to be branches in the image and likeness of the Vine). "Chosen that we should be holy." "Chosen to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit." "Elect in sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience." Some have abused the doctrine of election, and others, for fear of its abuse, have rejected it, because they have overlooked this teaching. They have occupied themselves with its hidden origin in eternity, with the inscrutable mysteries of the counsels of God instead of accepting the revelation of its purpose in time, and the blessings it brings into our Christian life.

Just think what these blessings are. In our verse Christ reveals His twofold purpose in choosing us to be His branches: that we may bear fruit on earth, and have power in prayer in Heaven. What confidence the thought that He has chosen us for this gives, that He will not fail to fit us for carrying out His purpose! What assurance that we can bear fruit that will abide, and can pray so as to obtain! What a continual call to the deepest humility and praise, to the most entire dependence and expectancy! He would not choose us for what we are not fit for, or what He could not fit us for. He has chosen us; this is the pledge, He will do all in us.

Let us listen in silence of soul to our holy Vine speaking to each of us: "You did not choose Me!" And let us say, "Yea, Lord, but I chose You! Amen, Lord!" Ask Him to show what this means. In Him, the true Vine, your life as branch has its divine origin, its eternal security, and the power to fulfill His purpose. From Him to whose will of love you owe all, you may expect all. In Him, His purpose, and His power, and His faithfulness, in His love let me abide.

I chose you. Lord, teach me what this means - that Thou hast set Thy heart on me, and chosen me to bear fruit that will abide, and to pray prayer that will prevail. In this Thine eternal purpose my soul would rest itself and say: "What He chose me for I will be, I can be, I shall be."

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

ABIDING FRUIT

I Chose You, and Appointed You, That Ye Should Go and Bear Fruit, and That Your Fruit Should Abide - John 15.16

There are some fruits that will not keep. One sort of pears or apples must be used at once; another sort can be kept over till next year. So there is in Christian work some fruit that does not last. There may be much that pleases and edified, and yet there is no permanent impression made on the power of the world or the state of the Church. On the other hand, there is work that leaves its mark for generations or for eternity. In it the power of God makes itself lastingly felt. It is the fruit of which Paul speaks when he describes the two styles of ministry: "My preaching was not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstrations of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." The more of man with his wisdom and power, the less of stability; the more of God's Spirit, the more of a faith standing in God's power.

Fruit reveals the nature of the tree from which it comes. What is the secret of bearing fruit that abides? The answer is simple. It is as our life abides in Christ, as we abide in Him, that the fruit we bear will abide. The more we allow all that is of human will and effort to be cut down short and cleansed away by the divine Husbandman, the more intensely our being withdraws itself from the outward that God may work in us by His Spirit; that is, the more wholly we abide in Christ, the more will our fruit abide.

What a blessed thought! He chose you, and appointed you to bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide. He never meant one of His branches to bring forth fruit that should not abide. The deeper I enter into the purpose of this His electing grace, the surer my confidence will become that I can bring forth fruit to eternal life, for myself and others. The deeper I enter into this purpose of His electing love, the more I will realize what the link is between the purpose from eternity, and the fruit to eternity: the abiding in Him. The purpose is His, He will carry it out; the fruit is His, He will bring it forth; the abiding is His, He will maintain it.

Let everyone who professes to be a Christian worker, pause. Ask whether you are leaving your mark for eternity on those around you. It is not your preaching or teaching, your strength of will or power to influence, that will secure this. *All depends on having your life full of God and His power.* And that again depends upon your living the truly branchlike life of abiding - very close and unbroken fellowship with Christ. It is the branch, that abides in Him, that brings forth much fruit, fruit that will abide.

Blessed Lord, reveal to my soul, I pray Thee, that Thou hast chosen me to bear much fruit. Let this be my confidence, that Thy purpose can be realized - Thou didst choose me. Let this be my power to forsake everything and give myself to Thee. Thou wilt Thyself perfect what Thou hast begun. Draw me so to dwell in the love and the certainty of that eternal purpose, that the power of eternity may posses me, and the fruit I bear may abide.

That ye may bear fruit. O my heavenly Vine, it is beginning to dawn upon my soul that fruit, more fruit - much fruit - abiding fruit is the one thing Thou hast to give me, and the one thing as branch I have to give Thee! Here I am. Blessed Lord, work out Thy purpose in me; let me bear much fruit, abiding fruit, to thy glory.

The True Vine

by Andrew Murray

PREVAILING PRAYER

I Appointed You That Ye Should Go and Bear Fruit, and That Your Fruit Should Abide: That Whatsoever Ye Shall Ask of the Father in My Name, He May Give It You - John 15.16

In the first verse of our parable, Christ revealed Himself as the true Vine, and the Father as the Husbandman, and asked for Himself and the Father a place in the heart. Here, in the closing verse, He sums up all His teaching concerning Himself and the Father in the twofold purpose for which He had chosen them. With reference to Himself, the Vine, the purpose was, that they should bear fruit. With reference to the Father, it was, that whatsoever they should ask in His name, should be done of the Father in Heaven. As fruit is the great proof of the true relation to Christ, so prayer is of our relation to the Father. A fruitful abiding in the Son, and prevailing prayer to the Father, are the two great factors in the true Christian life.

That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. - These are the closing words of the parable of the Vine. The whole mystery of the Vine and its branches leads up to the other mystery - that *whatsoever we ask in His name the Father gives!* See here the reason of the lack of prayer, and of the lack of power in prayer. It is because we so little live the true branch life, because we so little lose ourselves in the Vine, abiding in Him entirely, that we feel so little constrained to much prayer, so little confident that we shall be heard, and so do not know how to use His name as the key to God's storehouse. The Vine planted on earth has reached up into Heaven; it is only the soul wholly and intensely abiding in it, can reach into Heaven with power to prevail much. Our faith in the teaching and the truth of the parable, in the truth and the life of the Vine, must prove itself by power in prayer. The life of abiding and obedience, of love and joy, of cleansing and fruit-bearing, will surely lead to the power of prevailing prayer.

Whatsoever ye shall ask - The promise was given to disciples who were ready to give themselves, in the likeness of the true Vine, for their fellow men. This promise was all their provision for their work; they took it literally, they believed it, they used it, and they found it true. Let us give ourselves, as branches of the true Vine, and in His likeness, to the work of saving men, of bringing forth fruit to the glory of God, and we shall find a new urgency and power to pray and to claim the "whatsoever ye ask." We shall waken to our wonderful responsibility of having in such a promise the keys to the King's storehouses given us, and we shall not rest till we have received bread and blessing for the perishing.

"I chose you, that ye may bring forth fruit, and that your fruit may abide; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it to you." Beloved disciple, seek above everything to be a man of prayer. Here is the highest exercise of your privilege as a branch of the Vine; here is the full proof of your being renewed in the image of God and His Son; here is your power to show how you, like Christ, live not for yourself, but for others; here you enter Heaven to receive gifts for men; here your abiding in Christ has led to His abiding in you, to use you as the channel and instrument of His grace. The power to bear fruit for men has been crowned by power to prevail with God.

"I am the vine, my Father is the Husbandman." Christ's work in you is to bring you so to the Father that His Word may be fulfilled in you: "At that day ye shall ask in my name; and I say not that I will pray the Father for you; for

the Father himself loveth you." *The power of direct access to the Father for men, the liberty of intercession claiming and receiving blessing for them in faith, is the highest exercise of our union with Christ.* Let all who would truly and fully be branches give themselves to the work of intercession. It is the one great work of Christ the Vine in Heaven, the source of power for all His work. Make it your one great work as branch: it will be the power of all your work.

In My name. Yes, Lord, in Thy name, the new name Thou hast given Thyself here, the true Vine. As a branch, abiding in Thee in entire devotion, in full dependence, in perfect conformity, in abiding fruitfulness, I come to the Father, in Thee, and He will give what I ask. Oh, let my life be one of unceasing and prevailing intercession! Amen!

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

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PREFACE

During the life of Jesus on earth, the word He chiefly used when speaking of the relations of the disciples to Himself was: "Follow me." When about to leave for heaven, He gave them a new word, in which their more intimate and spiritual union with Himself in glory should be expressed. That chosen word was: "Abide in me."

It is to be feared that there are many earnest followers of Jesus from whom the meaning of this word, with the blessed experience it promises, is very much hidden. While trusting in their Saviour for pardon and for help, and seeking to some extent to obey Him, they have hardly realized to what closeness of union, to what intimacy of fellowship, to what wondrous oneness of life and interest, He invited them when He said, "Abide in me." This is not only an unspeakable loss to themselves, but the Church and the world suffer in what they lose.

If we ask the reason why those who have indeed accepted the Saviour, and been made partakers of the renewing of the Holy Ghost, thus come short of the full salvation prepared for them, I am sure the answer will in very many cases be, that ignorance is the cause of the unbelief that fails of the inheritance. If, in our orthodox Churches, the abiding in Christ, the living union with Him, the experience of His daily and hourly presence and keeping, were preached with the same distinctness and urgency as His atonement and pardon through His blood, I am confident that many would be found to accept with gladness the invitation to such a life, and that its influence would be manifest in their experience of the purity and the power, the love andthe joy, the fruit-bearing, and all the blessedness which the Saviour connected with the abiding in Him.

It is with the desire to help those who have not yet fully understood what the Saviour meant with His command, or who have feared that it was a life beyond their reach, that these meditations are now published. It is only by frequent repetition that a child learns its lessons. It is only by continuously fixing the mind for a time on some one of the lessons of faith, that the believer is gradually helped to take and thoroughly assimilate them. I have the hope that to some, especially young believers, it will be a help to come and for a month day after day spell over the precious words, "Abide in me," with the lessons connected with them in the parable of the Vine. Step by step we shall get to see how truly this promise-precept is meant for us, how surely grace is provided to enable us to obey it, how indispensable the experience of its blessing is to a healthy Christian life, and how unspeakable the blessings are that flow from it. As we listen, and meditate, and prayas we surrender ourselves, and accept in faith the whole Jesus as He offers Himself to us in it-the Holy Spirit will make the word to be spirit and life; this word of Jesus, too, will become to us the power of God unto salvation, and through it will come the faith that grasps the long desired blessing.

I pray earnestly that our gracious Lord may be pleased to bless this little book, to help those who seek to know Him fully, as He has already blessed it in its original issue in a different (the Dutch) language. I pray still more earnestly that He would, by whatever means, make the multitudes of His dear children who are still living divided lives, to see how He claims them wholly for Himself, and how the wholehearted surrender to abide in Him alone brings the joy unspeakable and full of glory. Oh, let each of us who has begun to taste the sweetness of this life, yield himself wholly to be a witness to the grace and power of our Lord to keep us united with Himself, and seek by word and walk to win others to follow Him fully. It is only in such fruitbearing that our own abiding can be maintained.

In conclusion, I ask to be permitted to give one word of advice to my reader. It is this. It needs time to grow into Jesus the Vine: do not expect to abide in Him unless you will give Him that time. It is not enough to read God's Word, or meditations as here offered, and when we think we have hold of the thoughts, and have asked God for His blessing, to go out in the hope that the blessing will abide. No, it needs day by day time with Jesus and with God. We all know the need of time for our meals each day-every workman claims his hour for dinner; the hurried eating of so much food is not enough. If we are to live through Jesus, we must feed on Him (John 6:57); we must thoroughly take in and assimilate that heavenly food the Father has given us in His life. Therefore, my brother, who would learn to abide in Jesus, take time each day, ere you read, and while you read, and after you read, to put yourself into living contact with the living Jesus, to yield yourself distinctly and consciously to His blessed influence; so will you give Him the opportunity of taking hold of you, of drawing you up and keeping you safe in His almighty life.

And now, to all God's children whom He allows me the privilege of pointing to the Heavenly Vine, I offer my fraternal love and salutations, with the prayer that to each one of them may be given the rich and full experience of the blessedness of abiding in Christ. And may the grace of Jesus, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be their daily portion. Amen.

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 1.

ALL YOU WHO HAVE COME TO HIM

"Come unto me."-MATT.11:28

"Abide in me."-JOHN 15:4

IT IS to you who have heard and hearkened to the call, "Come unto me," that this new invitation comes, "Abide in me." The message comes from the same loving Saviour. You doubtless have never repented having come at His call. You experienced that His word was truth; all His promises He fulfilled; He made you partakers of the blessings and the joy of His love. Was not His welcome most hearty, His pardon full and free, His love most sweet and precious? You more than once, at your first coming to Him, had reason to say, "The half was not told me."

And yet you have had to complain of disappointment: as time went on, your expectations were not realized. The blessings you once enjoyed were lost; the love and joy of your first meeting with your Saviour, instead of deepening, have become faint and feeble. And often you have wondered what the reason could be, that with such a Saviour, so mighty and so loving, your experience of salvation should not have been a fuller one.

The answer is very simple. You wandered from Him. The blessings He bestows are all connected with His "Come to ME," and are only to be enjoyed in close fellowship with Himself. You either did not fully understand, or did not rightly remember, that the call meant, "Come to me to stay with me." And yet this was in very deed His object and purpose when first He called you to Himself. It was not to refresh you for a few short hours after your conversion with the joy of His love and deliverance, and then to send you forth to wander in sadness and sin. He had destined you to something better than a short-lived blessedness, to be enjoyed only in times of special earnestness and prayer, and then to pass away, as you had to return to those duties in which far the greater part of life has to be spent. No, indeed; He had prepared for you an abiding dwelling with Himself, where your whole life and every moment of it might be spent, where the work of your daily life might be done, and where all the while you might be enjoying unbroken communion with Himself. It was even this He meant when to that first word, "Come to me," He added this, "Abide in me." As earnest and faithful, as loving and tender, as the compassion that breathed in that blessed "Come," was the grace that added this no less blessed "Abide." As mighty as the attraction with which that first word drew you, were the bonds with which this second, had you but listened to it, would have kept you. And as great as were the blessings with which that coming was rewarded, so large, yea, and much greater, were the treasures to which that abiding would have given you access.

And observe especially, it was not that He said, "Come to me and abide with me," but, "Abide in me." The intercourse was not only to be unbroken, but most intimate and complete. He opened His arms, to press you to His bosom; He opened His heart, to welcome you there; He opened up all His divine fulness of life and love, and offered to take you up into its fellowship, to make you wholly one with Himself. There was a depth of meaning you cannot yet realize in His words: "Abide IN ME."

And with no less earnestness than He had cried, "Come to me," did He plead, had you but noticed it, "Abide in me." By every motive that had induced you to come, did He beseech you to abide. Was it the fear of sin and its curse that first drew you? the pardon you received on first coming could, with all the blessings flowing from it, only be confirmed and fully enjoyed on abiding in Him. Was it the longing to know and enjoy the Infinite Love that was calling you? the first coming gave but single drops to taste'tis only the abiding that can really satisfy the thirsty soul, and give to drink of the rivers of pleasure that are at His right hand. Was it the weary longing to be made free from the bondage of sin, to become pure and holy, and so to find rest, the rest of God for the soul? this too can only be realized as you abide in Him-only abiding in Jesus gives rest in Him. Or if it was the hope of an inheritance in glory, and an everlasting home in the presence of the Infinite One: the true preparation for this,as well as its blessed foretaste in this life, are granted only to those who abide in Him. In very truth, there is nothing that moved you to come, that does not plead with thousandfold greater force: "Abide in Him." You did well to come; you do better to abide. Who would, after seeking the King's palace, be content to stand in the door, when he is invited in to dwell in the King's presence, and share with Him in all the glory of His royal life? Oh, let us enter in and abide, and enjoy to the full all the rich supply His wondrous love hath prepared for us!

And yet I fear that there are many who have indeed come to Jesus, and who yet have mournfully to confess that they know but little of this blessed abiding in Him. With some the reason is, that they never fully understood that this was the meaning of the Saviour's call. With others, that though they heard the word, they did not know that such a life of abiding fellowship was possible, and indeed within their reach. Others will say that, though they did believe that such a life was possible, and seek after it, they have never yet succeeded discovering the secret of its attainment. And others, again, alas! will confess that it is their own unfaithfulness that has kept them from the enjoyment of the blessing. When the Saviour would have kept them, they were not found ready to stay; they were not prepared to give up everything, and always, only, wholly to side in Jesus.

To all such I come now in the name of Jesus, their Redeemer and mine, with the blessed message: "Abide in me. " In His name I invite them to come, and for a season meditate with me daily on its meaning, its lessons, its claims, and its promises. I know how many, and, to the young believer, how difficult, the questions are which suggest themselves in connection with it. There is especially the question, with its various aspects, to the possibility, in the midst of wearying work and continual distraction, of keeping up, or rather being kept in, the abiding communion. I do not undertake to remove all difficulties; this Jesus Christ Himself alone must do by His Holy Spirit. But what I would fain by the grace of God be permitted to do is, to repeat day by day the Master's blessed command, "Abide in me," until it enter the heart and find a place there, no more to be forgotten or neglected. I would fain that in the light of Holy Scripture we should Meditate on its meaning, until the understanding, that gate to the heart, opens to apprehend something of what it offers and expects. So we shall discover the means of its attainment, and learn to know what keeps us from it, and what can help us to it. So we shall feel its claims, and be compelled to acknowledge that there can be no true allegiance to our King without simply and heartily accepting this one, too, of His commands. So we shall gaze on its blessedness, until desire be inflamed, and the will with all its energies be roused claim and possess the unspeakable blessing.

Come, my brethren, and let us day by day set ourselves at His feet, and meditate on this word of His, with an eye fixed on Him alone. Let us set ourselves quiet trust before Him, waiting to hear His holy voice-the still small voice that is mightier than the storm that rends the rocks-breathing its quickening spirit within us, as He speaks: "Abide in me." The soul that truly hears Jesus Himself speak the word, receives with the word the power to accept and to hold the blessing He offers.

And it may please Thee, blessed Saviour, indeed, to speak to us; let each of us hear Thy blessed voice. May the feeling of our deep need, and the faith of Thy wondrous love, combined with the sight of the wonderfully blessed

life Thou art waiting to bestow upon us, constrain us to listen and to obey, as often as Thou speakest: "Abide in me." Let day by day the answer from our heart be clearer and fuller: "Blessed Saviour, do abide in Thee. "

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 2

AND YOU SHALL FIND REST TO YOUR SOULS

"Come unto me, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; and ye shall find rest to your souls -MATT.11:28-29

REST for the soul: Such was the first promise with which the Saviour sought to win the heavy-laden sinner. Simple though it appears, the promise is indeed as large and comprehensive as can be found. Rest for the soul-does it not imply deliverance from every fear, the supply of every want, the fulfilment of every desire? And now nothing less than this is the prize with which the Saviour woos back the wandering one-who is mourning that the rest has notbeen so abiding or so full as it had hoped-to come back and abide in Him. Nothing but this was the reason that the rest has either not been found, or, if found, has been disturbed or lost again: you did not abide with, you did not abide in Him.

Have you ever noticed how, in the original invitation of the Saviour to come to Him, the promise of rest was repeated twice, with such a variation in the conditions as might have suggested that abiding rest could only be found in abiding nearness. First the Saviour says, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest"; the very moment you come, and believe, I will give you rest-the rest of pardon and acceptance-the rest in my love. But we know that all that God bestows needs time to become fully our own; it must be held fast, and appropriated, and assimilated into our inmost being; without this not even Christ's giving can make it our very own, in full experience and enjoyment. And so the Saviour repeats His promise, in words which clearly speak not so much of the initial rest with which He welcomes the weary one who comes, but of the deeper and personally appropriated rest of the soul that abides with Him. He now not only says, "Come unto me," but "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me"; become my scholars, yield ourselves to my training, submit in all things to my will, let your whole life be one with mine-in other words, Abide in me. And then He adds, not only, "I will give," but "ye shall find rest to your souls." The rest He gave at coming will become something you have really found and made your very own-the deeper the abiding rest which comes from longer acquaintance and closer fellowship, from entire surrender and deeper sympathy. "Take my yoke, and learn of me," "Abide in me"-this is the path to abiding rest.

Do not these words of the Saviour discover what you have perhaps often sought in vain to know, how it is that the rest you at times enjoy is so often lost. It must have been this: you had not understood how entire surrender to Jesus is the secret of perfect rest. Giving up one's whole life to Him, for Him alone to rule and order it; taking up His yoke, and submitting to be led and taught, to learn of Him; abiding in Him, to be and do only what He wills-these are the conditions of discipleship without which there can be no thought of maintaining the rest that was bestowed on first coming to Christ. The rest is in Christ, and not something He gives apart from Himself, and so it is only in having Him that the rest can really be kept and enjoyed.

It is because so many a young believer fails to lay hold of this truth that the rest so speedily passes away. With some it is that they really did not know; they were never taught how Jesus claims the undivided allegiance of the whole heart and life; how there is not a spot in the whole of life over which He does not wish to reign; how in the

very least things His disciples must only seek to please Him. They did not know how entire the consecration was that Jesus claimed. With others, who had some idea of what a very holy life a Christian ought to lead, the mistake was a different one: they could not believe such a life to be a possible attainment. Taking, and bearing, and never for a moment laying aside the yoke of Jesus, appeared to them to require such a strain of effort, and such an amount of goodness, as to be altogether beyond their reach. The very idea of always, all the day, abiding in Jesus, was too highsomething they might attain to after a life of holiness and growth, but certainly not what a feeble beginner was to start with. They did not know how, when Jesus said, "My yoke is easy," He spoke the truth; how just the yoke gives the rest, because the moment the soul yields itself to obey, the Lord Himself gives the strength and joy to do it. They did not notice how, when He said, "Learn of me," He added, "I am meek and lowly in heart," to assure them that His gentleness would meet their every need, and bear them as a mother bears her feeble child. Oh, they did not know that when He said, "Abide in me," He only asked the surrender to Himself, His almighty love would hold them fast, and keep and bless them. And so, as some had erred from the want of full consecration, so these failed because they did not fully trust. These two, consecration and faith, are the essential elements of the Christian life-the giving up all to Jesus, the receiving all from Jesus. They are implied in each other; they are united in the one word-surrender. A full surrender is to obey as well as to trust, to trust as well as to obey.

With such misunderstanding at the outset, it is no wonder that the disciple life was not one of such joy or strength as had been hoped. In some things you were led into sin without knowing it, because you had not learned how wholly Jesus wanted to rule you, and how you could not keep right for a moment unless you had Him very near you. In other things you knew what sin was, but had not the power to conquer, because you did not know or believe how entirely Jesus would take charge of you to keep and to help you. Either way, it was not long before the bright joy of your first love was lost, and your path, instead of being like the path of the just, shining more and more unto the perfect day, became like Israel's wandering in the desert ever on the way, never very far, and yet always coming short of the promised rest. Weary soul, since so many years driven to and fro like the panting hart, O come and learn this day the lesson that there is a spot where safety and victory, where peace and rest, are always sure, and that that spot is always open to thee-the heart of Jesus.

But, alas! I hear someone say, it is just this abiding in Jesus, always bearing His yoke, to learn of Him, that is so difficult, and the very effort to attain to this often disturbs the rest even more than sin or the world. What a mistake to speak thus, and yet how often the words are heard! Does it weary the traveller to rest in the house or on the bed where he seeks repose from his fatigue? Or is it a labour to a little child to rest in its mother's arms? Is it not the house that keeps the traveller within its shelter? do not the arms of the mother sustain and keep the little one? And so it is with Jesus. The soul has but to yield itself to Him, to be still and rest in the confidence that His love has undertaken, and that His faithfulness will perform, the work of keeping it safe in the shelter of His bosom. Oh, it is because the blessing is so great that our little hearts cannot rise to apprehend it; it is as if we cannot believe that Christ, the Almighty One, will in very deed teach and keep us all the day. And yet this is just what He has promised, for without this He cannot really give us rest. It is as our heart takes in this truth that, when He says, "Abide in me," "Learn of me," He really means it, and that it is His own work to keep us abiding when we yield ourselves to Him, that we shall venture to cast ourselves into the arms of His love, and abandon ourselves to His blessed keeping. It is not the yoke, but resistance to the yoke, that makes the difficulty; the whole-hearted surrender to Jesus, as at once our Master and our Keeper, finds and secures the rest.

Come, my brother, and let us this very day commence to accept the word of Jesus in all simplicity. It is a distinct command this: "Take my yoke, and learn of me, " "Abide in me. " A command has to be obeyed. The obedient scholar asks no questions about possibilities or results; he accepts every order in the confidence that his teacher has provided for all that is needed. The power and the perseverance to abide in the rest, and the blessing in

abiding-it belongs to the Saviour to see to this; 'tis mine to obey, 'tis His to provide. Let us this day in immediate obedience accept the command, and answer boldly, "Saviour, I abide in Thee. At Thy bidding I take Thy yoke; I undertake the duty without delay; I abide in Thee." Let each consciousness of failure only give new urgency to the command, and teach us to listen more earnestly than ever till the Spirit again give us to hear the voice of Jesus saying, with a love and authority that inspire both hope and obedience, "Child, abide in me." That word, listened to as coming from Himself, will be an end of all doubting-a divine promise of what shall surely be granted. And with ever-increasing simplicity its meaning will be interpreted. Abiding in Jesus is nothing but the giving up of oneself to be ruled and taught and led, and so resting in the arms of Everlasting Love.

Blessed rest! the fruit and the foretaste and the fellowship of God's own rest! found of them who thus come to Jesus to abide in Him. It is the peace of God, the great calm of the eternal world, that passeth all understanding, and that keeps the heart and mind. With this grace secured, we have strength for every duty, courage for every struggle, a blessing in every cross, and the joy of life eternal in death itself.

O my Saviour! if ever my heart should doubt or fear again, as if the blessing were too great to expect, or too high to attain, let me hear Thy voice to quicken my faith and obedience: "Abide in me"; "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; ye shall find rest to your souls."

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 3

TRUSTING HIM TO KEEP YOU

"I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I also am apprehended of Christ Jesus. "-PHIL.3:12

MORE than one admits that it is a sacred duty and a blessed privilege to abide in Christ, but shrinks back continually before the question: Is it possible, a life of unbroken fellowship with theSaviour? Eminent Christians, to whom special opportunities of cultivating this grace have been granted, may attain to it; for the large majority of disciples, whose life, by a divine appointment, is so fully occupied with the affairs of this life, it can scarce be expected. The more they hear of this life, the deeper their sense of its glory and blessedness, and there is nothing they would not sacrifice to be made partakers of it. But they are too weak, too unfaithful-they never can attain to it.

Dear souls! how little they know that the abiding in Christ is just meant for the weak, and so beautifully suited to their feebleness. It is not the doing of some great thing, and does not demand that we first lead a very holy and devoted life. No, it is simply weakness entrusting itself to a Mighty One to be kept-the unfaithful one casting self on One who is altogether trustworthy and true. Abiding in Him is not a work that we have to do as the condition for enjoying His salvation, but a consenting to let Him do all for us, and in us, and through us. It is a work He does for usthe fruit and the power of His redeeming love. Our part is simply to yield, to trust, and to wait for what He has engaged to perform.

It is this quiet expectation and confidence, resting on the word of Christ that in Him there is an abiding place prepared, which is so sadly wanting among Christians. They scarce take the time or the trouble to realize that when He says "Abide IN ME," He offers Himself, the Keeper of Israel that slumbers not nor sleeps, with all His power and love, as the living home of the soul, where the mighty influences of His grace will be stronger to keep than all their feebleness to lead astray. The idea they have of grace is thisthat their conversion and pardon are God's work, but that now, in gratitude to God, it is their work to live as Christians, and follow Jesus. There is always the thought of a work that has to be done, and even though they pray for help, still the work is theirs. They fail continually, and become hopeless; and the despondency only increases the helplessness. No, wandering one; as it was Jesus who drew you when He spake "Come," so it is Jesus who keeps you when He says "Abide." The grace to come and the grace to abide are alike from Him alone. That word Come, heard, meditated on, accepted, was the cord of love that drew you nigh; that word Abide is even so the band with which He holds you fast and binds you to Himself. Let the soul but take time to listen to the voice of Jesus. "In me," He says, "is thy place-in my almighty arms. It is I who love thee so, who speak Abide in me; surely thou canst trust me." The voice of Jesus entering and dwelling in the soul cannot but call for the response: "Yes, Saviour, in Thee I can, I will abide."

Abide in me: These words are no law of Moses, demanding from the sinful what they cannot perform. They are the command of love, which is ever only a promise in a different shape. Think of this until all feeling of burden and fear and despair pass away, and the first thought that comes as you hear of abiding in Jesus be one of bright and joyous hope: it is for me, I know I shall enjoy it. You are not under the law, with its inexorable Do, but under

grace, with its blessed Believe what Christ will do for you. And if the question be asked, "But surely there is something for us to do?" the answer is, "Our doing and working are but the fruit of Christ's work in us." It is when the soul becomes utterly passive, looking and resting on what Christ is to do, that its energies are stirred to their highest activity, and that we work most effectually because we know that He works in us. It is as we see in that word IN ME the mighty energies of love reaching out after us to have us and to hold us, that all the strength of our will is roused to abide in Him.

This connection between Christ's work and our work is beautifully expressed in the words of Paul: "I follow after, if that 1 may apprehend that whereunto I also am apprehended of Christ Jesus." It was because he knew that the mighty and the faithful One had grasped him with the glorious purpose of making him one with Himself, that he did his utmost to grasp the glorious prize. The faith, the experience, the full assurance, "Christ hath apprehended me," gave him the courage and the strength to press on and apprehend that whereunto he was apprehended. Each new insight of the great end for which Christ had apprehended and was holding him, roused him afresh to aim at nothing less.

Paul's expression, and its application to the Christian life, can be best understood if we think of a father helping his child to mount the side of some steep precipice. The father stands above, and has taken the son by the hand to help him on. He points him to the spot on which he will help him to plant his feet, as he leaps upward. The leap would be too high and dangerous for the child alone; but the father's hand is his trust, and he leaps to get hold of the point for which his father has taken hold of him. It is the father's strength that secures him and lifts him up, and so urges him to use his utmost strength.

Such is the relation between Christ and you, O weak and trembling believer! Fix first your eyes on the whereunto for which He has apprehended you. It is nothing less than a life of abiding, unbroken fellowship with Himself to which He is seeking to lift you up. All that you have already received-pardon and peace, the Spirit and His grace-are but preliminary to this. And all that you see promised to you in the futureholiness and fruitfulness and glory everlasting-are but its natural outcome. Union with Himself, and so with the Father, is His highest object. Fix your eye on this, and gaze until it stand out before you clear and unmistakeable: Christ's aim is to have me abiding in Him.

And then let the second thought enter your heart: Unto this 1 am apprehended of Christ. His almighty power hath laid hold on me, and offers now to lift me up to where He would have me. Fix your eyes on Christ. Gaze on the love that beams in those eyes, and that asks whether you cannot trust Him, who sought and found and brought you nigh, now to keep you. Gaze on that arm of power, and say whether you have reason to be assured that He is indeed able to keep you abiding in Him.

And as you think of the spot whither He pointsthe blessed whereunto for which He apprehended youand keep your gaze fixed on Himself, holding you and waiting to lift you up, O say, could you not this very day take the upward step, and rise to enter upon this blessed life of abiding in Christ? Yes, begin at once, and say, "O my Jesus, if Thou biddest me, and if Thou engagest to lift and keep me there, I will venture. Trembling, but trusting, I will say: Jesus, I do abide in Thee. "

My beloved fellow-believer, go, and take time alone with Jesus, and say this to Him. I dare not speak to you about abiding in Him for the mere sake of calling forth a pleasing religious sentiment. God's truth must at once be acted on. O yield yourself this very day to the blessed Saviour in the surrender of the one thing He asks of you: give up yourself to abide in Him. He Himself will work it in you. You can trust Him to keep you trusting and abiding.

And if ever doubts again arise, or the bitter experience of failure tempt you to despair, just remember where Paul found His strength: "I am apprehended of Jesus Christ." In that assurance you have a fountain of strength. From that you can look up to the whereunto on which He has set His heart, and set yours there too. From that you gather confidence that the good work He bath begun He will also perform. And in that conndence you will gather courage, day by day, afresh to say, " `I follow on, that I may also apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.' It is because Jesus has taken hold of me, and because Jesus keeps me, that I dare to say: Saviour, I abide in Thee. "

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 4

AS THE BRANCH IN THE VINE

"I am the vine, ye are the branches."-JOHN 15:5

It was in connection with the parable of the Vine that our Lord first used the expression, "Abide in me." That parable, so simple, and yet so rich in its teaching, gives us the best and most complete illustration of the meaning of our Lord's command, and the union to which He invites us.

The parable teaches us the nature of that union. The connection between the vine and the branch is a living one. No external, temporary union will suffice; no work of man can effect it: the branch, whether an original or an engrafted one, is such only by the Creator's own work, in virtue of which the life, the sap, the fatness, and the fruitfulness of the vine communicate themselves to the branch. And just so it is with the believer too. His union with his Lord is no work of human wisdom or human will, but an act of God, by which the closest and most complete life-union is effected between the Son of God and the sinner. "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts." The same Spirit which dwelt and still dwells in the Son, becomes the life of the believer; in the unity of that one Spirit, and the fellowship of the same life which is in Christ, he is one with Him. As between the vine and branch, it is a life-union that makes them one.

The parable teaches us the completeness of the union. So close is the union between the vine and the branch, that each is nothing without the other, that each is wholly and only for the other.

Without the vine the branch can do nothing. To the vine it owes its right of place in the vineyard, its life and its fruitfulness. And so the Lord says, "Without me ye can do nothing." The believer can each day be pleasing to God only in that which he does through the power of Christ dwelling in him. The daily inflowing of the life-sap of the Holy Spirit is his only power to bring forth fruit. He lives alone in Him and is for each moment dependent on Him alone.

Without the branch the vine can also do nothing. A vine without branches can bear no fruit. No less indispensable than the vine to the branch, is the branch to the vine. Such is the wonderful condescension of the grace of Jesus, that just as His people are dependent on Him, He has made Himself dependent on them. Without His disciples He cannot dispense His blessing to the world; He cannot offer sinners the grapes of the heavenly Canaan. Marvel not! It is His own appointment; and this is the high honour to which He has called His redeemed ones, that as indispensable as He is to them in heaven, that from Him their fruit may be found, so indispensable are they to Him on earth, that through them His fruit may be found. Believers, meditate on this, until your soul bows to worship in presence of the mystery of the perfect union between Christ and the believer.

There is more: as neither vine nor branch is anything without the other, so is neither anything except for the other.

All the vine possesses belongs to the branches. The vine does not gather from the soil its fatness and its sweetness

for itself-all it has is at the disposal of the branches. As it is the parent, so it is the servant of the branches. And Jesus, to whom we owe our life, how completely does He give Himself for us and to us: "The glory Thou gavest me, I have given them"; "He that believeth in me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works shall he do." All His fullness and all His riches are for thee, O believer; for the vine does not live for itself, keeps nothing for itself, but exists only for the branches. All that Jesus is in heaven, He is for us: He has no interest there separate from ours; as our representative He stands before the Father.

And all the branch possesses belongs to the vine. The branch does not exist for itself, but to bear fruit that can proclaim the excellence of the vine: it has no reason of existence except to be of service to the vine. Glorious image of the calling of the believer, and the entireness of his consecration to the service of his Lord. As Jesus gives Himself so wholly over to him, he feels himself urged to be wholly his Lord's. Every power of his being, every moment of his life, every thought and feeling, belong to Jesus, that from Him and for Him he may bring forth fruit. As he realizes what the vine is to the branch, and what the branch is meant to be to the vine, he feels that he has but one thing to think of and to live for, and that is, the will, the glory, the work, the kingdom of his blessed Lord-the bringing forth of fruit to the glory of His name.

The parable teaches us the object of the union. The branches are for fruit and fruit alone. "Every branch that beareth not fruit He taketh away." The branch needs leaves for the maintenance of its own life, and the perfection of its fruit: the fruit itself it bears to give away to those around. As the believer enters into his calling as a branch, he sees that he has to forget himself, and to live entirely for his fellowmen. To love them, to seek for them, and to save them, Jesus came: for this every branch on the Vine has to live as much as the Vine itself. It is for fruit, much fruit, that the Father has made us one with Jesus.

Wondrous parable of the Vine-unveiling the mysteries of the Divine love, of the heavenly life, of the world of Spirit-how little have I understood thee! Jesus the living Vine in heaven, and I the living branch on earth! How-little have I understood how great my need, but also how perfect my claim, to all His fullness! How little understood, how great His need, but also how perfect His claim, to my emptiness! Let me, in its beautiful light, study the wondrous union between Jesus and His people, until it becomes to me the guide into full communion with my beloved Lord. Let me listen and believe, until my whole being cries out, "Jesus is indeed to me the True Vine, bearing me, nourishing me, supplying me, using me, and filling me to the full to make me bring forth fruit abundantly." Then shall I not fear to say, "I am indeed a branch to Jesus, the True Vine, abiding in Him, resting on Him, waiting for Him, serving Him, and living only that through me, too, He may show forth the riches of His grace, and give His fruit to a perishing world."

It is when we try thus to understand the meaning of the parable, that the blessed command spoken in connection with it will come home to us in its true power. The thought of what the vine is to the branch, and Jesus to the believer, will give new force to the words, "Abide in me!" It will be as if He says, "Think, soul, how completely I belong to thee. I have joined myself inseparably to thee; all the fulness and fatness of the Vine are thine in very deed. Now thou once art in me, be assured that all I have is wholly thine. It is my interest and my honour to have thee a fruitful branch; only Abide in me. Thou art weak, but I am strong; thou art poor, but I am rich. Only abide in me; yield thyself wholly to my teaching and rule; simply trust my love, my grace, my promises. Only believe; I am wholly thine; I am the Vine, thou art the branch. Abide in me.

What sayest thou, 0 my soul? Shall I longer hesitate, or withhold consent? Or shall I not, instead of only thinking how hard and how difficult it is to live like a branch of the True Vine, because I thought of it as something I had to accomplish-shall I not now begin to look upon it as the most blessed and joyful thing under heaven? Shall I not believe that, now I once am in Him, He Himself will keep me and enable me to abide? On my part, abiding is

nothing but the acceptance of my position, the consent to be kept there, the surrender of faith to the strong Vine still to hold the feeble branch. Yes, I will, I do abide in Thee, blessed Lord Jesus.

O Saviour, how unspeakable is Thy love! "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me: it is high, I cannot attain unto it." I can only yield myself to Thy love with the prayer that, day by day, Thou wouldest unfold to me somewhat of its precious mysteries, and so encourage and strengthen Thy loving disciple to do what his heart longs to do indeed-ever, only, wholly to abide in Thee.

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 5

AS YOU CAME TO HIM, BY FAITH

"As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him: rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, abounding therein. "CoL.2:6-7

N THESE words the apostle teaches us the weighty lesson, that it is not only by faith that we first come to Christ and are united to Him, but that it is by faith that we are to be rooted and established in our union with Christ. Not less essential than for the commencement, is faith for the progress of the spiritual life. Abiding in Jesus can only be by faith.

There are earnest Christians who do not understand this; or, if they admit it in theory, they fail to realize its application in practice. They are very zealous for a free gospel, with our first acceptance of Christ, and justification by faith alone. But after this they think everything depends on our diligence and faithfulness. While they firmly grasp the truth, "The sinner shall be justified by faith," they have hardly found a place in their scheme for the larger truth, "The just shall live by faith." They have never understood what a perfect Saviour Jesus is, and how He will each day do for the sinner just as much as He did the first day when he came to Him. They know not that the life of grace is always and only a life of faith, and that in the relationship to Jesus the one daily and unceasing duty of the disciple is to believe, because believing is the one channel through which divine grace and strength flow out into the heart of man. The old nature of the believer remains evil and sinful to the last; it is only as he daily comes, all empty and helpless, to his Saviour to receive of His life and strength, that he can bring forth the fruits of righteousness to the glory of God. Therefore it is: "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him: rooted in Him, and stablished in the faith, abounding therein." As you came to Jesus, so abide in Him, by faith.

And if you would know how faith is to be exercised in thus abiding in Jesus, to be rooted more deeply and firmly in Him, you have only to look back to the time when first you received Him. You remember well what obstacles at that time there appeared to be in the way of your believing. There was first your vileness and guilt: it appeared impossible that the promise of pardon and love could be for such a sinner. Then there was the sense of weakness and death: you felt not the power for the surrender and the trust to which you were called. And then there was the future: you dared not undertake to be a disciple of Jesus while you felt so sure that you could not remain standing, but would speedily again be unfaithful and fall. These difficulties were like mountains in your way. And how were they removed? Simply by the word of God. That word, as it were, compelled you to believe that, notwithstanding guilt in the past, and weakness in the present, and unfaithfulness in the future, the promise was sure that Jesus would accept and save you. On that word you ventured to come, and were not deceived: you found that Jesus did indeed accept and save.

Apply this, your experience in coming to Jesus, to the abiding in Him. Now, as then, the temptations to keep you from believing are many. When you think of your sins since you became a disciple, your heart is cast down with shame, and it looks as if it were too much to expect that Jesus should indeed receive you into perfect intimacy and

the full enjoyment of His holy love. When you think how utterly, in times past, you have failed in keeping the most sacred vows, the consciousness of present weakness makes you tremble at the very idea of answering the Saviour's command with the promise, "Lord, from henceforth I will abide in Thee. " And when you set before yourself the life of love and joy, of holiness and fruitfulness, which in the future are to flow from abiding in Him, it is as if it only serves to make you still more hopeless: you, at least, can never attain to it. You know yourself too well. It is no use expecting it, only to be disappointed; a life fully and wholly abiding in Jesus is not for you.

Oh that you would learn a lesson from the time of your first coming to the Saviour! Remember, dear soul, how you then were led, contrary to all that your experience, and your feelings, and even your sober judgment said, to take Jesus at His word, and how you were not disappointed. He did receive you, and pardon you; He did love you, and save you-you know it. And if He did this for you when you were an enemy and a stranger, what think you, now that you are His own, will He not much more fulfil His promise? Oh that you would come and begin simply to listen to His word, and to ask only the one question: Does He really mean that I should abide in Him? The answer His word gives is so simple and so sure: By His almighty grace you now are in Him; that same almighty grace will indeed enable you to abide in Him. By faith you became partakers of the initial grace; by that same faith you can enjoy the continuous grace of abiding in Him.

And if you ask what exactly it is that you now have to believe that you may abide in Him, the answer is not difficult. Believe first of all what He says: "I am the Vine." The safety and the fruitfulness of the branch depend upon the strength of the vine. Think not so much of yourself as a branch, nor of the abiding as your duty, until you have first had your soul filled with the faith of what Christ as the Vine is. He really will be to you all that a vine can be-holding you fast, nourishing you, and making Himself every moment responsible for your growth and your fruit. Take time to know, set yourself heartily to believe: My Vine, on whom I can depend for all I need, is Christ. A large, strong vine bears the feeble branch, and holds it more than the branch holds the vine. Ask the Father by the Holy Ghost to reveal to you what a glorious, loving, mighty Christ this is, in whom you have your place and your life; it is the faith in what Christ is, more than anything else, that will keep you abiding in Him. A soul filled with large thoughts of the Vine will be a strong branch, and will abide confidently in Him. Be much occupied with Jesus, and believe much in Him, as the True Vine.

And then, when Faith can well say, "He is my Vine," let it further say, "I am His branch, I am in Him." I speak to those who say they are Christ's disciples, and on them I cannot too earnestly press the importance of exercising their faith in saying, "I am in Him." It makes the abiding so simple. If I realize clearly as I meditate: Now I am in Him, I see at once that there is nothing wanting but just my consent to be what He has made me, to remain where He has placed me. 1 am in Christ: This simple thought, carefully, prayerfully, believingly uttered, removes all difficulty as if there were some great attainment to be reached. No, 1 am in Christ, my blessed Saviour. His love has prepared a home for me with Himself, when He says, "Abide in my love"; and His power has undertaken to keep the door, and to keep me in, if I will but consent. 1 am in Christ: I have now but to say, "Saviour, I bless Thee for this wondrous grace. I consent; I yield myself to Thy gracious keeping; I do abide in Thee."

It is astonishing how such a faith will work out all that is further implied in abiding in Christ. There is in the Christian life great need of watchfulness and of prayer, of selfdenial and of striving, of obedience and of diligence. But "all things are possible to him that believeth." "This is the victory that overcometh, even our faith." It is the faith that continually closes its eyes to the weakness of the creature, and finds its joy in the sufficiency of an Almighty Saviour, that makes the soul strong and glad. It gives itself up to be led by the Holy Spirit into an ever deeper appreciation of that wonderful Saviour whom God bath given us-the Infinite Immanuel. It follows the leading of the Spirit from page to page of the blessed Word, with the one desire to take each revelation of what Jesus is and what He promises as its nourishment and its life. In accordance with the promise, "if that which ye

have heard from the beginning abide in you, ye shall also abide in the Father and the Son," it lives by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. And so it makes the soul strong with the strength of God, to be and to do all that is needed for abiding in Christ.

Believer, you would abide in Christ: only believe. Believe always; believe now. Bow even now before your Lord, and say to Him in childlike faith, that because He is your Vine, and you are His branch, you will this day abide in Him.

NOTE

" `I am the True Vine.' He who offers us the privilege of an actual union with Himself is the great I AM, the almighty God, who upholds all things by the word of His power. And this almighty God reveals Himself as our perfect Saviour, even to the unimaginable extent of seeking to renew our fallen natures by grafting them into His own Divine nature.

"To realize the glorious Deity of Him whose call sounds forth to longing hearts with such exceeding sweetness, is no small step towards gaining the full privilege to which we are invited. But longing is by itself of no use; still less can there be any profit in reading of the blessed results to be gained from a close and personal union with our Lord, if we believe that union to be practically beyond our reach. His words are meant to be a living, an eternal, precious reality. And this they can never become unless we are sure that we may reasonably expect their accomplishment. But what could make the accomplishment of such an idea possible -what could make it reasonable to suppose that we poor, weak, selfish creatures, full of sin and full of failures, might be saved out of the corruption of our nature and made partakers of the holiness of our Lord -except the fact, the marvellous, unalterable fact, that He who proposes to us so great a transformation is Himself the everlasting God, as able as He is willing to fulfil His own word. In meditating, therefore, upon these utterances of Christ, containing as they do the very essence of His teaching, the very concentration of His love, let us, at the outset, put away all tendency to doubt. Let us not allow ourselves so much as to question whether such erring disciples as we are can be enabled to attain the holiness to which we are called through a close and intimate union with our Lord. If there be any impossibility, any falling short of the proposed blessedness, it will arise from the lack of earnest desire on our part. There is no lack in any respect on His part who puts forth the invitation; with GOD there can be no shortcoming in the fulfilment of His promise."The Life of Fellowship; Meditations on John 15:1,11 by A. M. James.

It is perhaps necessary to say, for the sake of young or doubting Christians, that there is something more necessary than the effort to exercise faith in each separate promise that is brought under our notice. What is of even greater importance is the cultivation of a trustful disposition towards God, the habit of always thinking of Him, of His ways and His works, with bright confiding hopefulness. In such soil alone can the individual promises strike root and grow up. In a little work published by the Tract Society, Encouragements to Faith, by James Kimball, there will be found many most suggestive and helpful thoughts, all pleading for the right God has to claim that He shall be trusted. The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life is another little work that has been a great help to many. Its bright and buoyant tone, its loving and unceasing repetition of the keynote-we may indeed depend on Jesus to do all He has said, and more than we can think -has breathed hope and joy into many a heart that was almost ready to despair of ever getting on. In Frances Havergal's Kept, for the Master's Use, there is the same healthful, hope-inspiring tone.

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 6

GOD HIMSELF HAS UNITED YOU TO HIM

"OF GOD ARE YE IN CHRIST JESUS, who was made unto us wisdom from God, both righteousness and sanctification, and redemption."-I COR.1:30 (R.V. marg.).

"My Father is the husbandman. "-JOHN 15:1

Ye are in Christ Jesus." The believers at Corinth were still feeble and carnal, only babes in Christ. And yet Paul wants them, at the outset of his teaching, to know distinctly that they are in Christ Jesus. The whole Christian life depends on the clear consciousness of our position in Christ. Most essential to the abiding in Christ is the daily renewal of our faith's assurance, "I am in Christ Jesus." All fruitful preaching to believers must take this as its startingpoint: "Ye are in Christ Jesus."

But the apostle has an additional thought, of almost greater importance: "OE GOD are ye in Christ Jesus." He would have us not only remember our union to Christ, but specially that it is not our own doing, but the work of God Himself. As the Holy Spirit teaches us to realize this, we shall see what a source of assurance and strength it must become to us. If it is of God alone that I am in Christ, then God Himself, the Infinite One, becomes my security for all I can need or wish in seeking to abide in Christ.

Let me try to understand what it means, this wonderful "OF GOD in Christ." In becoming partakers of the union with Christ, there is a work God does and a work we have to do. God does His work by moving us to do our work. The work of God is hidden and silent; what we do is something distinct and tangible. Conversion and faith, prayer and obedience, are conscious acts of which we can give a clear account; while the spiritual quickening and strengthening that come from above are secret and beyond the reach of human sight. And so it comes that when the believer tries to say, "I am in Christ Jesus," he looks more to the work he did, than to that wondrous secret work of God by which he was united to Christ. Nor can it well be otherwise at the commencement of the Christian course. "I know that I have believed," is a valid testimony. But it is of great consequence that the mind should be led to see that at the back of our turning, and believing, and accepting of Christ, there was God's almighty power doing its work-inspiring our will, taking possession of us, and carrying out its own purpose of love in planting us into Christ Jesus. As the believer enters into this, the divine side of the work of salvation, he will learn to praise and to worship with new exultation, and to rejoice more than ever in the divineness of that salvation he has been made partaker of. At each step he reviews, the song will come, "This is the Lord's doing"Divine Omnipotence working out what Eternal Love had devised. "OF GOD I am in Christ Jesus."

The words will lead him even further and higher, even to the depths of eternity. "Whom He hath predestinated, them He also called." The calling in time is the manifestation of the purpose in eternity. Ere the world was, God had fixed the eye of His sovereign love on you in the election of grace, and chosen you in Christ. That you know yourself to be in Christ, is the steppingstone by which you rise to understand in its full meaning the word, "OF GOD I am in Christ Jesus." With the prophet, your language will be, "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me:

yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." And you will recognise your own salvation as a part of that "mystery of His will, according to the good pleasure of His will which He purposed in Himself," and join with the whole body of believers in Christ as these say, "In whom we also have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." Nothing will more exalt free grace, and make man bow very low before it, than this knowledge of the mystery "OF GOD in Christ."

It is easy to see what a mighty influence it must exert on the believer who seeks to abide in Christ. What a sure standing-ground it gives him, as he rests his right to Christ and all His fulness on nothing less than the Father's own purpose and work! We have thought of Christ as the Vine, and the believer as the branch; let us not forget that other precious word, "My Father is the husbandman." The Saviour said, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up"; but every branch grafted by Him in the True Vine, shall never be plucked out of His hand. As it was the Father to whom Christ owed all He was, and in whom He had all His strength and His life as the Vine, so to the Father the believer owes his place and his security in Christ. The same love and delight with which the Father watched over the beloved Son Himself, watch over every member of His body, every one who is in Christ Jesus.

What confident trust this faith inspires-not only as to the being kept in safety to the end, but specially as to the being able to fulfil in every point the object for which I have been united to Christ. The branch is as much in the charge and keeping of the husbandman as the vine; his honour as much concerned in the wellbeing and growth of the branch as of the vine. The God who chose Christ to be Vine fitted Him thoroughly for the work He had as Vine to perform. The God who has chosen me and planted me in Christ, has thereby engaged to secure, if I will but let Him, by yielding myself to Him, that I in every way be worthy of Jesus Christ. Oh that I did but fully realize this! What confidence and urgency it would give to my prayer to the God and Father of Jesus Christ! How it would quicken the sense of dependence, and make me see that praying without ceasing is indeed the one need of my life-an unceasing waiting, moment by moment, on the God who has united me to Christ, to perfect His own divine work, to work in me both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

And what a motive this would be far the highest activity in the maintenance of a fruitful branch-life! Motives are mighty powers; it is of infinite importance to have them high and clear. Here surely is the highest: "You are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works": grafted by Him into Christ, unto the bringing forth of much fruit. Whatever God creates is exquisitely suited to its end. He created the sun to give light: how perfectly it does its work! He created the eye to see: how beautifully it fulfils its object! He created the new man unto good works: how admirably it is fitted for its purpose.

OF GOD I am in Christ: created anew, made a branch of the Vine, fitted for fruit-bearing. Would to God that believers would cease looking most at their old nature, and complaining of their weakness, as if God called them to what they were unfitted for! Would that they would believingly and joyfully accept the wondrous revelation of how God, in uniting them to Christ, has made Himself chargeable for their spiritual growth and fruitfulness! How all sickly hesitancy and sloth would disappear, and under the influence of this mighty motive-the faith in the faithfulness of Him of whom they are in Christ-their whole nature would rise to accept and fulfil their glorious destiny!

O my soul! yield yourself to the mighty influence of this word: "OF GOD ye are in Christ Jesus." It is the same GOD of WHOM Christ is made all that He is for us, of WHOM we also are in Christ, and will most surely be made what we must be to Him. Take time to meditate and to worship, until the light that comes from the throne of God has shone into you, and you have seen your union to Christ as indeed the work of His almighty Father. Take

time, day after day, and let, in your whole religious life, with all it has of claims and duties, of needs and wishes, God be everything. See Jesus, as He speaks to you, "Abide in me," pointing upward and saying, "My FATHER IS THE HUSBANDMAN Of Him you are in me, through Him you abide in me, and to Him and to His glory shall be the fruit you bear." And let your answer be, Amen, Lord! So be it. From eternity Christ and I were ordained for each other; inseparably we belong to each other: it is God's will; I shall abide in Christ. It is of God I am in Christ Jesus.

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 7

AS YOUR WISDOM

"Of God are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us WISDOM from God, both righteousness and sanctification, and redemption."-I COR.1:30 (R.V. marg.).

JESUS CHRIST is not only Priest to purchase, and King to secure, but also Prophet to reveal to us the salvation which God bath prepared for them that love Him. Just as at the creation the light was first called into existence, that in it all God's other works might have their life and beauty, so in our text wisdom is mentioned first as the treasury in which are to be found the three precious gifts that follow. The life is the light of man; it is in revealing to us, and making us behold the glory of God in His own face, that Christ makes us partakers of eternal life. It was by the tree of knowledge that sin came; it is through the knowledge that Christ gives that salvation comes. He is made of God unto us wisdom. In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

And of God you are in Him, and have but to abide in Him, to be made partaker of these treasures of wisdom. In Him you are, and in Him the wisdom is; dwelling in Him, you dwell in the very fountain of all light; abiding in Him, you have Christ the wisdom of God leading your whole spiritual life, and ready to communicate, in the form of knowledge, just as much as is needful for you to know. Christ is made unto us wisdom: you are in Christ.

It is this connection between what Christ has been made of God to us, and how we have it only as also being in Him, that we must learn to understand better. We shall thus see that the blessings prepared for us in Christ cannot be obtained as special gifts in answer to prayer apart from the abiding in Him. The answer to each prayer must come in the closer union and the deeper abiding in Him; in Him, the unspeakable gift, all other gifts are treasured up, the gift of wisdom and knowledge too.

How often have you longed for wisdom and spiritual understanding that you might know God better, whom to know is life eternal! Abide in Jesus: your life in Him will lead you to that fellowship with God in which the only true knowledge of God is to be had. His love, His power, His infinite glory will, as you abide in Jesus, be so revealed as it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive. You may not be able to grasp it with the understanding, or to express it in words; but the knowledge which is deeper than thoughts or words will be given-the knowing of God which comes of being known of Him. "We preach Christ crucified unto them which are called, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

Or you would fain count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ your Lord. Abide in Jesus, and be found in Him. You shall know Him in the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. Following Him, you shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. It is only when God shines into the heart, and Christ Jesus dwells there, that the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Christ can be seen.

Or would you understand his blessed work, as He wrought it on earth, or works it from heaven by His Spirit?

Would you know how Christ can become our righteousness, and our sanctification, and redemption? It is just as bringing, and revealing, and communicating these that He is made unto us wisdom from God. There are a thousand questions that at times come up, and the attempt to answer them becomes a weariness and a burden. It is because you have forgotten you are in Christ, whom God has made to be your wisdom. Let it be your first care to abide in Him in undivided fervent devotion of heart; when the heart and the life are right, rooted in Christ, knowledge will come in such measure as Christ's own wisdom sees meet. And without such abiding in Christ the knowledge does not really profit, but is often most hurtful. The soul satisfies itself with thoughts which are but the forms and images of truth, without receiving the truth itself in its power. God's way is ever first to give us, even though it be but as a seed, the thing itself, the life and the power, and then the knowledge. Man seeks the knowledge first, and often, alas! never gets beyond it. God gives us Christ, and in Him hid the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. O let us be content to possess Christ, to dwell in Him, to make Him our life, and only in a deeper searching into Him, to search and find the knowledge we desire. Such knowledge is life indeed.

Therefore, believer, abide in Jesus as your wisdom, and expect from Him most confidently whatever teaching you may need for a life to the glory of the Father. In all that concerns your spiritual life, abide in Jesus as your wisdom. The life you have in Christ is a thing of infinite sacredness, far too high and holy for you to know how to act it out. It is He alone who can guide you, as by a secret spiritual instinct, to know what is becoming your dignity as a child of God, what will help and what will hinder your inner life, and specially your abiding in Him. Do not think of it as a mystery or a difficulty you must solve. Whatever questions come up as to the possibility of abiding perfectly and uninterruptedly in Him, and of really obtaining all the blessing that comes from it, always remember: He knows, all is perfectly clear to Him, and He is my wisdom. Just as much as you need to know and are capable of apprehending, will be communicated, if you only trust Him. Never think of the riches of wisdom and knowledge hid in Jesus as treasures without a key, or of your way as a path without a light. Jesus your wisdom is guiding you in the right way, even when you do not see it.

In all your intercourse with the blessed Word, remember the same truth: abide in Jesus, your wisdom. Study much to know the written Word; but study more to know the living Word, in whom you are of God. Jesus, the wisdom of God, is only known by a life of implicit confidence and obedience. The words He speaks are spirit and life to those who live in Him. Therefore, each time you read, or hear, or meditate upon the Word, be careful to take up your true position. Realize first your oneness with Him who is the wisdom of God; know yourself to be under His direct and special training; go to the Word abiding in Him, the very fountain of divine light-in His light you shall see light.

In all your daily life its ways and its work, abide in Jesus as your wisdom. Your body and your daily life share in the great salvation: in Christ, the wisdom of God, provision has been made for their guidance too. Your body is His temple, your daily life the sphere for glorifying Him: it is to Him a matter of deep interest that all your earthly concerns should be guided aright. Only trust His sympathy, believe His love, and wait for His guidance-it will be given. Abiding in Him, the mind will be calmed and freed from passion, the judgment cleared and strengthened, the light of heaven will shine on earthly things, and your prayer for wisdom, like Solomon's, will be fulfilled above what you ask or think.

And so, especially in any work you do for God, abide in Jesus as your wisdom. "We are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God bath before ordained that we should walk in them"; let all fear or doubt lest we should not know exactly what these works are, be put far away. In Christ we are created for them: He will show us what they are, and how to do them. Cultivate the habit of rejoicing in the assurance that the divine wisdom is guiding you, even where you do not yet see the way.

All that you can wish to know is perfectly clear to Him. As Man, as Mediator, He has access to the counsels of Deity, to the secrets of Providence, in your interest, and on your behalf. If you will but trust Him fully, and abide in Him entirely, you can be confident of having unerring guidance.

Yes, abide in Jesus as your wisdom. Seek to maintain the spirit of waiting and dependence, that always seeks to learn, and will not move but as the heavenly light leads on. Withdraw yourself from all needless distraction, close your ears to the voices of the world, and be as a docile learner, ever listening for the heavenly wisdom the Master has to teach. Surrender all your own wisdom; seek a deep conviction of the utter blindness of the natural understanding in the things of God; and both as to what you have to believe and have to do, wait for Jesus to teach and to guide. Remember that the teaching and guidance come not from without: it is by His life in us that the divine wisdom does His work. Retire frequently with Him into the inner chamber of the heart, where the gentle voice of the Spirit is only heard if all be still. Hold fast with unshaken confidence, even in the midst of darkness and apparent desertion, His own assurance that He is the light and the leader of His own. And live, above all, day by day in the blessed truth that, as He Himself, the living Christ Jesus, is your wisdom, your first and last care must ever be this alone-to abide in Him. Abiding in Him, His wisdom will come to you as the spontaneous outflowing of a life rooted in Him. I am, I abide in Christ, who was made unto us wisdom from God; wisdom will be given me.

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 8

AS YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

"Of God are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, both RIGHTEOUSNESS and sanctification, and redemption."-I Cor.1:30 (R.V. marg.).

THE first of the great blessings which Christ our wisdom reveals to us as prepared in Himself, is -righteousness. It is not difficult to see why this must be first.

There can be no real prosperity or progress in a nation, a home, or a soul, unless there be peace. As not even a machine can do its work unless it be in rest,secured on a good foundation, quietness and assurance are indispensable to our moral and spiritual wellbeing. Sin had disturbed all our relations; we were out ofharmony with ourselves, with men, and with God. The first requirement of a salvation that should really bring blessedness to us was peace. And peace can only come with right. Where everything is as God would have it, in God's order and in harmony with His will, there alone can peace reign. Jesus Christ came torestore peace on earth, and peace in the soul, by restoring righteousness. Because He is Melchizedek, King of righteousness, He reigns as King of Salem, King of peace (Heb.7:2). He so fulfils the promise the prophets held out: "A king shall reign in righteousness: and the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever" (Isa.32:1,17). Christ is made of God unto us righteousness; of God we are in Him as our righteousness; we are made the righteousness of God in Him. Let us try to understand what this means.

When first the sinner is led to trust in Christ for salvation, he, as a rule, looks more to His work than His person.

As he looks at the Cross, and Christ suffering there, the Righteous One for the unrighteous, he sees in that atoning death the only but sufficient foundation for his faith in God's pardoning mercy. The substitution, and the curse-bearing, and the atonement of Christ dying in the stead of sinners, are what give him peace. And as he understands how the righteousness which Christ brings becomes his very own, and how, in the strength of that, he is counted righteous before God, he feels that he has what he needs to restore him to God's favour: "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." He seeks to wear this robe of righteousness in the ever renewed faith in the glorious gift of righteousness which has been bestowed upon him.

But as time goes on, and he seeks to grow in the Christian life, new needs arise. He wants to understand more fully how it is that God can thus justify the ungodly on the strength of the righteousness of another. He finds the answer in the wonderful teaching of Scripture as to the true union of the believer with Christ as the second Adam. He sees that it is because Christ had made Himself one with His people, and they were one with Him; that it was in perfect accordance with all law in the kingdom of nature and of heaven, that each member of the body should have the full benefit of the doing and the suffering as of the life of the head. And so he is led to feel that it can only be in fully realizing his personal union with Christ as the Head, that he can fully experience the power of His righteousness to bring the soul into the full favour and fellowship of the Holy One. The work of Christ doesnot become less precious, but the Person of Christ more so; the work leads up into the very heart, the lose and the life

of the Godman.

And this experience sheds its light again upon Scripture. It leads him to notice, what he had scarce remarked before, how distinctly the righteousness of God, as it becomes ours, is connected with the Person of the Redeemer. "This is His name whereby HE shall be called, JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." "IN JEHOVAH have I righteousness and strength." "OF God is HE made unto us righteousness." "That we might be made the righteousness of God IN HIM." "That I may be found IN HIM, having the righteousness of God." He sees how inseparable righteousness and life in Christ are from each other: "The righteousness of one comes upon all unto justification of life." "They which receive the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." And he understands what deep meaning there is in the key-word of the Epistle to the Romans: "The righteous shall live by faith." He is not now content with only thinking of the imputed righteousness as his robe; but, putting on Jesus Christ, and seeking to be wrapped up in, to be clothed upon with Himself and His life, he feels how completely the righteousness of God is his, because the Lord our righteousness is his. Before he understood this, he too often felt it difficult to wear his white robe all the day: it was as if he specially had to put it on when he came into God's presence to confess his sins, and seek new grace. But now the living Christ Himself is his righteousness-that Christ who watches over, and keeps and loves us as His own; it is no longer an impossibility to walk all the day enrobed in the loving presence with which He covers His people.

Such an experience leads still further. The life and the righteousness are inseparably linked, and the believer becomes more conscious than before of a righteous nature planted within him. The new man created in Christ Jesus, is "created in righteousness and true holiness." "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous." The union to Jesus has effected a change not only in the relation to God, but in the personal state before God. And as the intimate fellowship to which the union has opened up the way is maintained, the growing renewal of the whole being makes righteousness to be his very nature.

To a Christian who begins to see the deep meaning of the truth, "HE is made to us righteousness," it is hardly necessary to say, "Abide in Him." As long as he only thought of the righteousness of the substitute, and our being counted judicially righteous for His sake, the absolute necessity of abiding in Him was not apparent. But as the glory of "Jehovah our righteousness" unfolds to the view, he sees that abiding in Him personally is the only way to stand, at all times, complete and accepted before God, as it is the only way to realize how the new and righteous nature can be strengthened from Jesus our Head. To the penitent sinner the chief thought was the righteousness which comes through Jesus dying for sin; to the intelligent and advancing believer, Jesus, the Living One, through whom the righteousness comes, is everything, because having Him he has the righteousness too.

Believer, abide in Christ as your righteousness. You bear about with you a nature altogether corrupt and vile, ever seeking to rise up and darken your sense of acceptance, and of access to unbroken fellowship with the Father. Nothing can enable you to dwell and walk in the light of God, without even the shadow of a cloud between, but the habitual abiding in Christ as your righteousness. To this you are called. Seek to walk worthy of that calling. Yield yourself to the Holy Spirit to reveal to you the wonderful grace that permits you to draw nigh to God, clothed in a divine righteousness. Take time to realize that the King's own robe has indeed been put on, and that in it you need not fear entering His presence. It is the token that you are the man whom the King delights to honour. Take time to remember that as much as you need it in the palace, no less do you require it when He sends you forth into the world, where you are the King's messenger and representative. Live your daily life in the full consciousness of being righteous in God's sight, an object of delight and pleasure in Christ. Connect every view you have of Christ in His other graces with this first one: "Of God He is made to you righteousness." This will keep you in perfect peace. Thus shall you enter into, and dwell in, the rest of God. So shall your inmost being be

transformed into being righteous and doing righteousness. In your heart and life it will become manifest where you dwell; abiding in Jesus Christ, the Righteous One, you will share His position, His character, and His blessedness: "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Joy and gladness above measure will be your portion.

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 9

AS YOUR SANCTIFICATION

"Of God are ye in Christ Jesus, who has made unto us wisdom from God, both righteousness and SANCTIFICATION, and redemption." I COR.1:30(R.V. marg.).

"Paul unto the Church of God which is at Corinth to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints" ;- thus the chapter opens in which we are taught that Christ is our sanctification. In the Old Testament, believers were called the righteous; in the New Testament they are called saints, the holy ones, sanctified in Christ Jesus. Holy is higher than righteous. I Holy in God has reference to His inmost being; righteous, to His dealings with His creatures. In man, righteousness is but a stepping stone to holiness. It is in this he can approach most near to the perfection of' God (comp. Matt.5:48; I Pet.1:16). In the Old Testament righteousness was found, while holiness was only typified; ill Jesus Christ, the Holy One, and in His people, His saints or holy ones, it is first realized.

As in Scripture, and in our text, so in personal experience righteousness precedes holiness. When first the believer finds Christ as his righteousness, he has such joy in the new-made discovery that the study of holiness hardly has a place. But as he grows, the desire for holiness makes itself felt, and he seeks to know what provision his God has made for supplying that need. A superficial acquaintance with God's plan leads to the view that while justification is God's work, by faith in Christ, sanctification is our work, to be performed under the influence of the gratitude we feel for the deliverance we have experienced, and by the aid of the Holy Spirit. But the earnest Christian soon finds how little gratitude can supply the power. When he thinks that more prayer will bring it, he finds that, indispensable as prayer is, it is not enough. Often the believer struggles hopelessly for years, until he listens to the teaching of the Spirit, as He glorifies Christ again, and reveals Christ, our sanctification, to be appropriated by faith alone.

Christ is made of God unto us sanctification. Holiness is the very nature of God, and that alone is holy which God takes possession of and fills with Himself. God's answer to the question, How could sinful man become holy? is, "Christ, the Holy One of God." In Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, God's holiness was revealed incarnate, and brought within reach of man. "I sanctify myself for them, that they also may be sanctified in truth." There is no other way of our becoming holy, but by becoming partakers of the holiness of Christ.' And there is no other way of this taking place than by our personal spiritual union with Him, so that through His Holy Spirit His holy life flows into us. "Of God are ye in Christ, who is made unto us sanctification." Abiding by faith in Christ our sanctification is the simple secret of a holy life. The measure of sanctification will depend on the measure of abiding in Him; as the soul learns wholly to abide in Christ, the promise is increasingly fulfilled: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly."

To illustrate this relation between the measure of the abiding and the measure of sanctification experienced, let us think of the grafting a tree, that instructive symbol of our union to Jesus. The illustration is suggested by the Saviour's words, "Make the tree good, and his fruit good." I can graft a tree so that only a single branch bears

good fruit, while many of the natural branches remain, and bear their old fruit-a type of believer in whom a small part of the life is sanctified, but in whom, from ignorance or other reasons, the carnal life still in many respects has full dominion. I can graft a tree so that every branch is cut off, and the whole tree becomes renewed to bear good fruit; and yet, unless I watch over the tendency of the stems to give sprouts, they may again rise and grow strong, and, robbing the new graft of the strength it needs, make it weak. Such are Christians who, when apparently powerfully converted, forsake all to follow Christ, and yet after a time, through unwatchfulness, allow old habits to regain their power, and whose Christian life and fruit are but feeble. But if I want a tree wholly made good, I take it when young, and, cutting the stem clean off on the ground, I graft it just where it emerges from the soil. I watch over every bud which the old nature could possibly put forth, until the flow of sap from the old roots into the new stem is so complete, that the old life has, as it were, been entirely conquered and covered by the new. Here I have a tree entirely renewed-emblem of the Christian who has learnt in entire consecration to surrender everything for Christ, and in a wholehearted faith wholly to abide in Him.

If, in this last case, the old tree were a reasonable being that could co-operate with the gardener, what would his language be to it? Would it not be this: "Yield now yourself entirely to this new nature with which I have invested you; repress every tendency of the old nature to give buds or sprouts; let all your sap and all your life-powers rise up into this graft from yonder beautiful tree, which I have put on you; so shallyou bring forth sweet and much fruit." And the language of the tree to the gardener would be: "When you graft me, O spare not a single branch; let everything of the old self, even the smallest bud, be destroyed, that I may no longer live in my own, but in that other life that was cut off and brought and put upon me, that I might be wholly new and good." And, once again, could you afterwards ask the renewed tree, as it was bearing abundant fruit, what it could say of itself, its answer would be this: "In me, that is, in my roots, there dwells no good thing. I am ever inclined to evil; the sap I collect from the soil is in its nature corrupt, and ready to show itself in bearing evil fruit. But just when the sap rises into the sunshine to ripen into fruit, the wise gardener has clothed me with a new life, through which my sap is purified, and all my powers are renewed to the bringing forth of good fruit. I have only to abide in that which I have received. He cares for the immediate repression and removal of every bud which the old nature still would put forth."

Christian, fear not to claim God's promises to make you holy. Listen not to the suggestion that the corruption of your old nature would render holiness an impossibility. In your flesh dwells no good thing, and that flesh, though crucified with Christ, is not yet dead, but will continually seek to rise and lead you to evil. But the Father is the Husbandman. He has grafted the life of Christ on your life. That holy life is mightier than your evil life; under the watchful care of the Husbandman, that new life can keep down the workings of the evil life within you. The evil nature is there, with its unchanged tendency to rise up and show itself. But the new nature is there too-the living Christ, your sanctification, is thereand through Him all your powers can be sanctified as they rise into life, and be made to bear fruit to the glory of the Father.

And now, if you would live a holy life, abide in Christ your sanctification. Look upon Him as the Holy One of God, made man that He might communicate to us the holiness of God. Listen when Scripture teaches that there is within you a new nature, a new man, created in Christ Jesus in righteousness and true holiness. Remember that this holy nature which is in you is singularly fitted for living a holy life, and performing all holy duties, as much so as the old nature is for doing evil. Understand that this holy nature within you has its root and life in Christ in heaven, and can only grow and become strong as the intercourse between it and its source is uninterrupted. And above all, believe most confidently that Jesus Christ Himself delights in maintaining that new nature within you, and imparting to it His own strength and wisdom for its work. Let that faith lead you daily to the surrender of all selfconfidence, and the confession of the utter corruption of all there is in you by nature. Let it fill you with a quiet and assured confidence that you are indeed able to do what the Father expects of you as His child, under the

covenant of His grace, because you have Christ strengthening you. Let it teach you to lay yourself and your services on the altar as spiritual sacrifices, holy and acceptable in His sight, a sweet-smelling savour. Look not upon a life of holiness as a strain and an effort, but as the natural outgrowth of the life of Christ within you. And let ever again a quiet, hopeful, gladsome faith hold itself assured that all you need for a holy life will most assuredly be given you out of the holiness of Jesus. Thus will you understand and prove what it is to abide in Christ our sanctification.

NOTE

The thought that in the personal holiness of our Lord a new holy nature was formed to be communicated to us, and that we make use of it by faith, is the centralidea of Marshall's invaluable work, The Gospel Mystery of Sanctcation:

"One great mystery is, that the holy frame and disposition whereby our souls are furnished and enabled for immediate practice of the law, must be obtained by receiving it out of Christ's fulness, as a thing already prepared and brought to an existence ,for us in Christ, and treasured up in Him; and that, as we are justified by a righteousness wrought out in Christ, and imputed to us, so we are sanctified by such an holy frame and qualification as are first wrought out and completed in Christ for us, and then imparted to us. As our natural corruption was produced originally in the first Adam, and propagated from him to us, so our new nature and holiness is first produced in Christ, and derived from Him to us, or, as it were, propagated. So that we are not at all to work together with Christ in making or producing that holy frame in us, but only to take it to ourselves, and use it in our holy practice, as made ready to our hands. Thus we have fellowship with Christ, in receiving that holy frame of spirit that was originally in Him; for fellowship is where several persons have the same things in common. This mystery is so great, that notwithstanding all the light of the Gospel, we commonly think that we must get an holy frame by producing it anew in ourselves, and by pursuing it and working it out of our own heart" .

Chapter 10

AS YOUR REDEMPTION

"Of God are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, both righteousness and sanctification, and REDEMPTION."-I COR.1:30(R.V. marg.).

HERE we have the top of the ladder, reaching into heaven-the blessed end to which Christ and life in Him is to lead. The word redemption, though sometimes applied to our deliverance fromthe guilt of sin, here refers to our complete and final deliverance from all its consequences, when the Redeemer's work shall become fully manifest, even to the redemption of the body itself (comp. Rom.8: 21-23 ; Eph.1.14; 4:30). The expression points us to the highest glory to be hoped for in the future, and therefore also to the highest blessing to be enjoyed in the presentin Christ. We have seen how, as a Prophet, Christ is our wisdom, revealing to us God and His love, with the nature and conditions of the salvation that love has prepared. As a Priest, He is our righteousness, restoring us to right relations to God, and securing us His favour and friendship. As a King, He is our sanctification, forming and guiding us into the obedience to the Father's holy will. As these three offices work out God's one purpose, the grand consummation will be reached,the complete deliverance from sin and all its effects be accomplished, and ransomed humanity regain all that it had ever lost.

Christ is made of God unto us redemption. The word invites us to look upon Jesus, not only as He lived onearth, teaching us by word and example, as He died, to reconcile us with God, as He lives again, a victorious King, rising to receive His crown, but as, sitting at the right hand of God, He takes again the glory which He had with the Father, before the world began, and holds it there for us. It consists in this, that there His human nature, yea, His human body, freed from all the consequences of sin to which He once had been exposed, is now admitted to share the divine glory. As Son of Man, He dwells on the throne and in the bosom of the Father: the deliverance from what He had to suffer from sin is complete and eternal. The complete redemption is found embodied in His own Person: what He as man is and has in heaven is the complete redemption. HE is made of God to us redemption.

We are in Him as such. And the more intelligently and believingly we abide in Him as our redemption, the more shall we experience, even here, of "the powers of the world to come." As our communion with Him becomes more intimate and intense, and we let the Holy Spirit reveal Him to us in His heavenly glory, the more we realize how the life in us is the life of One who sits upon the throne of heaven. We feel the power of an endless life working in us. We taste the eternal life. We have the foretaste of the eternal glory.

The blessings flowing from abiding in Christ as our redemption are great. The soul is delivered from all fear of death. There was a time when even the Saviour feared death. But now no longer. He has triumphed over death; even His body has entered into the glory. The believer who abides in Christ as his full redemption, realizes even now his spiritual victory over death. It becomes to him the servant that removes the last rags of the old carnal vesture, ere he be clothed upon with the new body of glory. It carries the body to the grave, to lie there as the seed whence the new body will arise the worthy companion of the glorified spirit.The resurrection of the body is no longer a barren doctrine, but a living expectation, and even an incipient experience, because the Spirit of Him that raised Jesus from the dead, dwells in the body as the pledge that even our mortal bodies shall be quickened (Rom.8:11-23). This faith exercises its sanctifying influence in the willing surrender of the sinful members of the body to be mortified and completely subjected to the dominion of the Spirit, as preparation for the time when the

frail body shall be changed and fashioned like to His glorious body.

This full redemption of Christ as extending to the body, has a depth of meaning not easily expressed. It was of man as a whole, soul and body that it is said that he was made in the image and likeness of God. In the angels, God had created spirits without material bodies; in the creation of the world, there was matter without spirit. Man was to be the highest specimen of divine art: the combination in one being, of matter and spirit in perfect harmony, as type of the most perfect union between God and His own creation. Sin entered in, and appeared to thwart the divine plan: the material obtained a fearful supremacy over the spiritual. The Word was made ,flesh, the divine fulness received an embodiment in the humanity of Christ, that the redemption might be a complete and perfect one; that the whole creation, which now groaneth and travaileth in pain together, might be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. God's purpose will not be accomplished, and Christ's glory will not be manifested fully, until the body, with that whole of nature of which it is part and head, has been transfigured by the power of the spiritual life, and made the transparent vesture for showing forth the glory of the Infinite Spirit. Then only shall we understand: "Christ Jesus is made unto us (complete) redemption."

Meantime we are taught to believe: "Of God are ye in Christ, as your redemption." This is not meant as a revelation, to be left to the future; for the full development of the Christian life, our present abiding in Christ must seek to enter into and appropriate it. We do this as we learn to triumph over death. We do it as we learn to look upon Christ as the Lord of our body, claiming its entire consecration, securing even here, if faith will claim it (Mark 16:17-18), victory over the terrible dominion sin hath had in the body. We do this as we learn to look on all nature as part of the Kingdom of Christ, destined, even though it be through a baptism of fire, to partake in His redemption. We do it as we allow the powers of the coming world to possess us, and to lift us up into a life in the heavenly places, to enlarge our hearts and our views, to anticipate, even here, the things which have never entered into the heart of man to conceive.

Believer, abide in Christ as your redemption. Let this be the crown of your Christian life. Seek it not first or only, apart from the knowledge of Christ in His other relations. But seek it truly as that to which they are meant to lead you up. Abide in Christ as your redemption. Nothing will fit you for this but faithfulness in the previous steps of the Christian life. Abide in Him as your wisdom, the perfect revelation of all that God is and has for you. Follow, in the daily ordering of the inner and the outer life, with meek docility His teaching, and you shall be counted worthy to have secrets revealed to you which to most disciples are a sealed book. The wisdom will lead you into the mysteries of complete redemption. Abide in Him as your righteousness, and dwell clothed upon with Him in that inner sanctuary of the Father's favour and presence to which His righteousness gives you access. As you rejoice in your reconciliation, you shall understand how it includes all things, and how they too wait the full redemption; "for it pleased the Father by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things on earth or things in heaven." And abide in Him as your sanctification; the experience of His power to make you holy, spirit and soul and body, will quicken your faith in a holiness that shall not cease its work until the bells of the horses and every pot in Jerusalem shall be holiness to the Lord. Abide in Him as your redemption, and live, even here, as the heir of the future glory. And as you seek to experience in yourself to the full, the power of His saving grace, your heart shall be enlarged to realize the position man has been destined to occupy in the universe, as having all things made subject to him, and you shall for your part be fitted to live worthy of that high and heavenly calling.

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 11

THE CRUCIFIED ONE

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."-GAL.2:20.

"We have been planted together in the likeness of his death. "Rom.6:5

"I am crucified with Christ." Thus the apostle expresses his assurance of his fellowship with Christ in His sufferings and death, and his full participation in all the power and the blessing of thatdeath. And so really did he mean what he said, andknow that he was now indeed dead, that he adds: "It is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me."How blessed must be the experience of such a unionwith the Lord Jesus! To be able to look upon His death as mine, just as really as it was His-upon Hisperfect obedience to God, His victory over sin, andcomplete deliverance from its power, as mine; and torealize that the power of that death does by faith work daily with a divine energy in mortifying the flesh, andrenewing the whole life into the perfect conformity to the resurrection life of Jesus! Abiding in Jesus, the Crucified One, is the secret of the growth of that new life which is ever begotten of the death of nature.

Let us try to understand this. The suggestive expression, "Planted into the likeness of His death," will teach us what the abiding in the Crucified One means. When a graft is united with the stock on which it is to grow, we know that it must be kept fixed, it must abide in the place where the stock has been cut, been wounded, to make an opening to receive the graft. No graft without wounding the laying bare and opening up of the inner life of the tree to receive the stranger branch. It is only through such wounding that access can be obtained to the fellowship of the sap and the growth and the life of the stronger stem. Even so with Jesus and the sinner. Only when we are planted into the likeness of His death shall we also be in the likeness of His resurrection, partakers of the life and the power there are in Him. In the death of the Cross Christ was wounded, and in His opened wounds a place prepared where we might be grafted in. And just as one might say to a graft, and does practically say as it is fixed in its place, "Abide here in the wound of the stem, that is now to bear you"; so to the believing soul the message comes, "Abide in the wounds of Jesus; there is the place of union, and life, and growth. There you shall see how His heart was opened to receive you; how His flesh was rent that the way might be opened for your being made one with Him, and having access to all the blessings flowing from His divine nature."

You have also noticed how the graft has to be torn away from the tree where it by nature grew, and to be cut into conformity to the place prepared for it in the wounded stem. Even so the believer has to be made conformable to Christ's death-to be crucified and to die with Him. The wounded stem and the wounded graft are cut to fit into each other, into each other's likeness. There is a fellowship between Christ's sufferings and your sufferings. His experiences must become yours. The disposition He manifested in choosing and bearing the cross must be yours. Like Him, you will have to give full assent to the righteous judgment and curse of a holy God against sin. Like Him, you have to consent to yield your life, as laden with sin and curse,to death, and through it to pass to the new life. Like Him, you shall experience that it is only through the self-sacrifice of Gethsemane and Calvary that the path is to be found to the joy and the fruit-bearing of the resurrection life. The more clear the resemblance

between the wounded stem and the wounded graft, the more exactly their wounds fit into each other, the surer and the easier, and the more complete will be the union and the growth.

It is in Jesus, the Crucified One, I must abide. I must learn to look upon the Cross as not only an atonement to God, but also a victory over the devil-not only a deliverance from the guilt, but also from the power of sin. I must gaze on Him on the Cross as wholly mine, offering Himself to receive me into the closest union and fellowship, and to make me partaker of the full power of His death to sin, and the new life of victory to which it is but the gateway. I must yield myself to Him in an undivided surrender, with much prayer and strong desire, imploring to be admitted into the ever closer fellowship and conformity of His death, of the Spirit in which He died that death.

Let me try and understand why the Cross is thus the place of union. On the Cross the Son of God enters into the fullest union with man-enters into the fullest experience of what it says to have become a son of man, a member of a race under the curse. It is in death that the Prince of life conquers the power of death; it is in death alone that He can make me partaker of that victory. The life He imparts is a life from the dead; each new experience of the power of that life depends upon the fellowship of the death. The death and the life are inseparable. All the grace which Jesus the Saving One gives is given only in the path of fellowship with Jesus the Crucified One. Christ came and took my place; I must put myself in His place, and abide there. And there is but one place which is both His and mine-that place is the Cross. His in virtue of His free choice; mine by reason of the curse of sin. He came there to seek me; there alone I can find Him. When He found me there, it was the place of cursing; this He experienced, for "cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." He made it a place of blessing; this I experienced, for Christ has delivered us from the curse, being made a curse for us. When Christ comes in my place, He remains what He was, the beloved of the Father; but in the fellowship with me He shares my curse and dies my death. When I stand in His place, which is still always mine, I am still what I was by nature, the accursed one, who deserves to die; but as united to Him, I share His blessing, and receive His life. When He came to be one with me He could not avoid the Cross, for the curse always points to the Cross as its end and fruit. And when I seek to be one with Him, I cannot avoid the Cross either, for nowhere but on the Cross are life and deliverance to be found. As inevitably as my curse pointed Him to the Cross as the only place where He could be fully united to me, His blessing points me to the Cross too as the only place where I can be united to Him. He took my cross for His own; I must take His Cross as my own; I must be crucified with Him. It is as I abide daily, deeply in Jesus the Crucified One, that I shall taste the sweetness of His love, the power of His life, the completeness of His salvation.

Beloved believer! it is a deep mystery, this of the Cross of Christ. I fear there are many Christians who are content to look upon the Cross, with Christ on it dying for their sins, who have little heart for fellowship with the Crucified One. They hardly know that He invites them to it. Or they are content to consider the ordinary afflictions of life, which the children of the world often have as much as they, as their share of Christ's Cross. They have no conception of what it is to be crucified with Christ, that bearing the cross means likeness to Christ in the principles which animated Him in His path of obedience. The entire surrender of all self-will, the complete denial to the flesh of its every desire and pleasure, the perfect separation from the world in all its ways of thinking and acting, the losing and hating of one's life, the giving up of self and its interests for the sake of others-this is the disposition which marks him who has taken up Christ's Cross, who seeks to say, "I am crucified with Christ; I abide in Christ, the Crucified One."

Would you in very deed please your Lord, and live in as close fellowship with Him as His grace could maintain you in? O pray that His Spirit lead you into this blessed truth: this secret of the Lord for them that fear Him. We know how Peter knew and confessed Christ as the Son of the living God while the Cross was still an offence (Matt.16:16,17,21,23). The faith that believes in the blood that pardons, and the life that renews, can only reach its perfect growth as it abides beneath the Cross, and in living fellowship with Him seeks for perfect conformity

with Jesus the Crucified.

O Jesus, our crucified Redeemer, teach us not only to believe on Thee, but to abide in Thee, to take Thy Cross not only as the ground of our pardon, but also as the law of our life. O teach us to love it not only because on it Thou didst bear our curse, but because on it we enter into the closest fellowship with Thyself, and are crucified with Thee. And teach us, that as we yield ourselves wholly to be possessed of the Spirit in which Thou didst bear the Cross, we shall be made partakers of the power and the blessing to which the Cross alone gives access.

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 12

GOD HIMSELF WILL ESTABLISH YOU

"He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, is God."-2 COR.1:21

THESE words of Paul teach us a much needed and most blessed truth-that just as our first being united with Christ was the work of divine omnipotence, so we may look to the Father, too, for being kept and being fixed more firmly in Him. "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me"-this expression of confidence should ever accompany the prayer, "Forsake not the work of Thine own hands." In all his longings and prayers to attain to a deeper and more perfect abiding in Christ, the believer must hold fast his confidence: "He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." There is nothing that will so help to root and ground him in Christ as this faith: "He which stablisheth us in Christ is God."

How many there are who can witness that this faith is just what they need! They continually mourn over the variableness of their spiritual life. Sometimes there are hours and days of deep earnestness, and even of blessed experience of the grace of God. But how little is needed to mar their peace, to bring a cloud over the soul! And then, how their faith is shaken! All efforts to regain their standing appear utterly fruitless; and neither solemn vows, nor watching and prayer, avail to restore to them the peace they for a while had tasted. Could they but understand how just their ownefforts are the cause of their failure, because it is God alone who can establish us in Christ Jesus. They would see that just as in justification they had to cease from their own working, and to accept in faith the promise that God would give them life in Christ, so now, in the matter of their sanctification, their first need is to cease, from striving themselves to establish the connection with Christ more firmly, and to allow God to do it. "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ." What they need is the simple faith that the stablishing in Christ, day by day, is God's work-a work that He delights to do, in spite of all our weakness and unfaithfulness, if we will but trust Him for it.

To the blessedness of such a faith, and the experience it brings, many can testify. What peace and rest, to know that there is a Husbandman who cares for the branch, to see that it grows stronger, and that its union with the Vine becomes more perfect, who watches over every hindrance and danger, who supplies every needed aid! What peace and rest, fully and finally to give up our abiding into the care of God, and never have a wish or thought, never to offer a prayer or engage in an exercise connected with it, without first having the glad remembrance that what we do is only the manifestation of what God is doing in us! The establishing in Christ is His work: He accomplishes it by stirring us to watch, and wait, and work. But this He can do with power only as we cease interrupting Him by our self-working-as we accept in faith the dependent posture which honours Him and opens the heart to let Him work. How such a faith frees the soul from care and responsibility! In the midst of the rush and bustle of the world's stirring life, amid the subtle and ceaseless temptations of sin, amid all the daily cares and trials that so easily distract and lead to failure, how blessed it would be to be an established Christianalways abiding in Christ! How blessed even to have the faith that one can surely become it-that the attainment is within our reach!

Dear believer, the blessing is indeed within your reach. He that stablisheth you with us in Christ is God. What I want you to take in is this-that believing this promise will not only give you comfort, but will be the means of your obtaining your desire. You know how Scripture teaches us that in all God's leadings of His people faith has everywhere been the one condition of the manifestation of His power. Faith is the ceasing from all nature's efforts, and all other dependence; faith is confessed helplessness casting itself upon God's promise, and claiming its fulfilment; faith is the putting ourselves quietly into God's hands for Him to do His work. What you and I need now is to take time, until this truth stands out before us in all its spiritual brightness: It is God Almighty, God the Faithful and Gracious One, who has undertaken to stablish me in Christ Jesus.

Listen to what the Word teaches you:-"The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto Himself"; "O Lord God, stablish their heart unto Thee"; "Thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever"; "Thou wilt establish the heart of the humble"; "Now to Him that is of power to establish you, be glory for ever"; "To the end He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness" ; "THE LORD IS FAITHFUL, who shall stablish you and keep you from all evil"; "The God of all grace, who hath called us in Christ Jesus, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." Can you take these words to mean anything less than that you too-however fitful your spiritual life has hitherto been, however unfavourable your natural character or your circumstances may appear-can be established in Christ Jesuscan become an established Christian? Let us but take time to listen, in simple childlike teachableness, to these words as the truth of God, and the confidence will come: As surelyas I am in Christ, I shall also, day by day, be established in Him.

The lesson appears so simple; and yet the most of us take so long to learn it. The chief reason is, that the grace the promise offers is so large, so God-like, so beyond all our thoughts, that we do not take it really to mean what it says. The believer who has once come to see and accept what it brings, can bear witness to the wonderful change there comes over the spiritual life. Hitherto he had taken charge of his own welfare; now he has a God to take charge of it. He now knows himself to be in the school of God, a Teacher who plans the whole course of study for each of His pupils with infinite wisdom, and delights to have them come daily for the lessons He has to give. All he asks is to feel himself constantly in God's hands, and to follow His guidance, neither lagging behind nor going before. Remembering that it is God who worketh both to will and to do, he sees his only safety to be in yielding himself to God's working. He lays aside all anxiety about his inner life and its growth, because the Father is the Husbandman under whose wise and watchful care each plant is well secured. He knows that there is the prospect of a most blessed life of strength and fruitfulness to every one who will take God alone and wholly as his hope.

Believer, you cannot but admit that such a life of trust must be a most blessed one. You say, perhaps, that there are times when you do, with your whole heart, consent to this way of living, and do wholly abandon the care of your inner life to your Father. But somehow it does not last. You forget again; and instead of beginning each morning with the joyous transference of all the needs and cares of your spiritual life to the Father's charge, you again feel anxious, and burdened, and helpless. Is it not, perhaps, my brother, because you have not committed to the Father's care this matter , daily remembering to renew your entire surrender? Memory is one of the highest powers in our nature. By it day is linked to day, the unity of life through all our years is kept up, and we know that we are still ourselves. In the spiritual life, recollection is of infinite value. For the sanctifying of our memory, in the service of our spiritual life, God has provided most beautifully. The Holy Spirit is the remembrancer, the Spirit of recollection. Jesus said, "He shall bring all things to your remembrance." "He which stablisheth us with you in Christ is God, who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." It is just for the stablishing that the Holy Remembrancer has been given. God's blessed promises, and your unceasing acts of faith and surrender accepting of them-He will enable you to remember these each day. The Holy Spirit isblessed be God-the memory of the new man.

Apply this to the promise of the text: "He that stablisheth us in Christ is God." As you now, at this moment, abandon all anxiety about your growth and progress to the God who has undertaken to stablish you in the Vine, and feel what a joy it is to know that God alone has charge, ask and trust Him by the Holy Spirit ever to remind you of this your blessed relation to Him. He will do it; and with each new morning your faith may grow stronger and brighter: I have a God to see that each day I become more firmly united to Christ.

And now, beloved fellow-believer, "the God of all grace, who hath called us in Christ Jesus, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." What more can you desire? Expect it confidently, ask it fervently. Count on God to do His work. And learn in faith to sing the song, the notes of which each new experience will make deeper and sweeter: "Now to Him, that is of power to establish you, be glory for ever. Amen." Yes, glory to God, who has undertaken to establish us in Christ!

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 13

EVERY MOMENT

"In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. "-ISA.27:2,3.

THE vineyard was the symbol of the people of Israel, in whose midst the True Vine was to stand The branch is the symbol of the individual believer, who stands in the Vine. The song of the vineyard is also the song of the Vine and its every branch. The command still goes forth to the watchers of the vineyard-would that they obeyed it, and sang till every feeble-hearted believer had learned and joined the joyful strain-"Sing ye unto her: 1, JEHOVAH, Do KEEP IT; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I WILL KEEP it night and day."

What an answer from the mouth of God Himself to the question so often asked: Is it possible for the believer always to abide in Jesus? Is a life of unbroken fellowship with the Son of God indeed attainable here in this earthly life? Truly not, if the abiding is our work, to be done in our strength. But the things that are impossible with men are possible with God. If the Lord Himself will keep the soul night and day, yea, will watch and water it every moment, then surely the uninterrupted communion with Jesus becomes a blessed possibility to those who can trust God to mean and to do what He says. Then surely the abiding of the branch of the vine day and night, summer and winter, in a neverceasing life-fellowship, is nothing less than the simple but certain promise of your abiding in your Lord.

In one sense, it is true, there is no believer who does not always abide in Jesus; without this there could not be true life. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth." But when the Saviour gives the command, "Abide in me," with the promise, "He that abideth in me bringeth forth much fruit," He speaks of that willing, intelligent, and whole-hearted surrender by which we accept His offer, and consent to the abiding in Him as the only life we choose or seek. The objections raised against our right to expect that we shall always be able thus voluntarily and consciously to abide in Jesus are chiefly two.

The one is derived from the nature of man. It is said that our limited powers prevent our being occupied with two things at the same moment. God's providence places many Christians in business, where for hours at a time the closest attention is required to the work they have to do. How can such a man, it is asked, with his whole mind in the work he has to do, be at the same time occupied with Christ, and keeping up fellowship with Him? The consciousness of abiding in Jesus is regarded as requiring such a strain, and such a direct occupation of the mind with heavenly thoughts, that to enjoy the blessing would imply a withdrawing of oneself from all the ordinary avocations of life. This is the same error as drove the first monks into the wilderness.

Blessed be God, there is no necessity for such a going out of the world. Abiding in Jesus is not a work that needs each moment the mind to be engaged, or the affections to be directly and actively occupied with it. It is an entrusting of oneself to the keeping of the Eternal Love, in the faith that it will abide near us, and with its holy presence watch over us and ward offpie evil, even when we have to be most intently occupied with other things.

And so the heart has rest and peace and joy in the consciousness of being kept when it cannot keep itself.

In ordinary life, we have abundant illustration of the influence of a supreme affection reigning in and guarding the soul, while the mind concentrates itself on work that requires its whole attention. Think of the father of a family, separated for a time from his home, that he may secure for his loved ones what they need. He loves his wife and children, and longs much to return to them. There may be hours of intense occupation when he has not a moment to think of them, and yet his love is as deep and real as when he can call up their images; all the while his love and the hope of making them happy urge him on, and fill him with a secret joy in his work. Think of a king: in the midst of work, and pleasure, and trial, he all the while acts under the secret influence of the consciousness of royalty, even while he does not think of it. A loving wife and mother never for one moment loses the sense of her relation to the husband and children: the consciousness and the love are there, amid all her engagements. And shall it be thought impossible for the Everlasting Love so to take and keep possession of our spirits, that we too shall never for a moment lose the secret consciousness: We are in Christ, kept in Him by His almighty power. Oh, it is possible; we can be sure it is. Our abiding in Jesus is even more than a fellowship of love-it is a fellowship of life. In work or in rest, the consciousness of life never leaves us. And even so can the mighty power of the Eternal Life maintain within us the consciousness of its presence. Or rather, Christ, who is our life, Himself dwells within us, and by His presence maintains our consciousness that we are in Him.

The second objection has reference to our sinfulness. Christians are so accustomed to look upon sinning daily as something absolutely inevitable, that they regard it as a matter of course that no one can keep up abiding fellowship with the Saviour: we must sometimes be unfaithful and fail. As if it was not just because we have a nature which is naught but a very fountain of sin, that the abiding in Christ has been ordained for us as our only but our sufficient deliverance! As if it were not the Heavenly Vine, the living, loving Christ, in whom we have to abide, and whose almighty power to hold us fast is to be the measure of our expectations! As if He would give us the command, "Abide in me," without securing the grace and the power to enable us to perform it! As if, above all, we had not the Father as the Husbandman to keep us from falling, and that not in a large and general sense, but according to His own precious promise: "Night and day, every moment!" Oh, if we will but look to our God as the Keeper of Israel, of whom it is said, "Jehovah shall keep thee from all evil; He shall keep thy soul," we shall learn to believe that conscious abiding in Christ every moment, night and day, is indeed what God has prepared for them that love Him.

My beloved fellow-Christians, let nothing less than this be your aim. I know well that you may not find it easy of attainment; that there may come more than one hour of weary struggle and bitter failure. Were the Church of Christ what it should be-were older believers to younger converts what they should be, witnesses to God's faithfulness, like Caleb and Joshua, encouraging their brethren to go up and possess the land with their, "We are well able to overcome; if the Lord delight in us, then HE WILL BRING us into this land"-were the atmosphere which the young believer breathes as he enters the fellowship of the saints that of a healthy, trustful, joyful consecration, abiding in Christ would come as the natural outgrowth of being in Him. But in the sickly state in which such a great part of thebody is, souls that are pressing after this blessing are sorely hindered by the depressing influence of the thought and the life around them. It is not to discourage that I say this, but to warn, and to urge to a more entire casting of ourselves upon the word of God Himself. There may come more than our hour in which you are ready to yield to despair; but be of good courage. Only believe. He who has put the blessing within your reach will assuredly lead to its possession.

The way in which souls enter into the possession may differ. To some it may come as the gift of a moment. In times of revival, in the fellowship with other believers in whom the Spirit is working effectually, under the leading of some servant of God who can guide, and sometimes in solitude too, it is as if all at once a new

revelation comes upon the soul. It sees, as in the light of heaven, the strong Vine holding and bearing the feeble branches so securely, that doubt becomes impossible. It can only wonder how it ever could have understood the words to mean aught else than this: To abide unceasingly in Christ is the portion of every believer. It sees it; and to believe, and rejoice, and love, come as of itself.

To others it comes by a slower and more difficult path. Day by day, amid discouragement and difficulty, the soul has to press forward. Be of good cheer; this way too leads to the rest. Seek but to keep your heart set upon the promise: "I THE LORD DO KEEP IT, night and day." Take from His own lips the watchword: "Every moment." In that you have the law of His love, and the law of your hope. Be content with nothing less. Think no longer that the duties and the cares, that the sorrows and the sins of this life must succeed in hindering the abiding life of fellowship. Take rather for the rule of your daily experience the language of faith: I am persuaded that neither death with its fears, nor life with its cares, nor things present with their pressing claims, nor things to come with their dark shadows, nor height of joy, nor depth of sorrow, nor any other creature, shall be able, for one single moment, to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, and in which He is teaching me to abide. If things look dark and faith would fail, sing again the song of the vineyard: "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." And be assured that, if Jehovah keep the branch night and day, and water it every moment, a life of continuous and unbroken fellowship with Christ is indeed our privilege.

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 14

DAY BY DAY

"And the people shall go out and gather the portion of a day in his day."-Ex.16:4(marg.).

THE day's portion in its day: Such was the rule for God's giving and man's working in the ingathering of the manna. It is still the law in all the dealings of God's grace with His children. A clear insight into the beauty and application of this arrangement is a wonderful help in understanding how one, who feels himself utterly weak, can have the confidence and the perseverance to hold on brightly through all the years of his earthly course. A doctor was once asked by a patient who had met with a serious accident: "Doctor, how long shall I have to lie here?" The answer, "Only a day at a time," taught the patient a precious lesson. It was the same lesson God had recorded for His people of all ages long before: The day's portion in its day.

It was, without doubt, with a view to this and to meet man's weakness, that God graciously appointed the change of day and night. If time had been given toman in the form of one long unbroken day, it wouldhave exhausted and overwhelmed him; the change ofday and night continually recruits and recreates hispowers. As a child, who easily makes himself masterof a book, when each day only the lesson for the day isgiven him, would be utterly hopeless if the whole bookwere given him at once; so it would be with man, if there were no divisions in time. Broken small and divided into fragments, he can bear them; only the care and the work of each day have to be undertaken -the day's portion in its day. The rest of the night fits him for making a fresh start with each new morning; the mistakes of the past can be avoided, its lessons improved. And he has only each day to be faithful for the one short day, and long years and a long life take care of themselves, without the sense of their length or their weight ever being a burden.

Most sweet is the encouragement to be derived from this truth in the life of grace. Many a soul is disquieted with the thought as to how it will be able to gather and to keep the manna needed for all its years of travel through such a barren wilderness. It has never learnt what unspeakable comfort there is in the word: The day's portion for its day. That word takes away all care for the morrow most completely. Only to-day is yours; to-morrow is the Father's. The question: What security have you that during all the years in which you have to contend with the coldness, or temptations, or trials of the world, you will always abide in Jesus? is one you need, yea, you may not ask. Manna, as your food and strength, is given only by the day; faithfully to fill the present is your only security for the future. Accept, and enjoy, and fulfil with your whole heart the part you have this day to perform. His presence and grace enjoyed to-day will remove all doubt whether you can entrust the morrow to Him too.

How great the value which this truth teaches us to attach to each single day! We are so easily led to look at life as a great whole, and to neglect the little to-day, to forget that the single days do indeed make up the whole, and that the value of each single day depends on its influence on the whole. One day lost is a link broken in the chain, which it often takes more than another day to mend. One day lost influences the next,and makes its keeping more difficult. Yea, one day lost may be the loss of what months or years of careful labour had secured. The experience of many a believer could confirm this.

Believer! would you abide in Jesus, let it be day by day. You have already heard the message: Moment by moment; the lesson of day by day has something more to teach. Of the moments there are many where there is no direct exercise of the mind on your part; the abiding is in the deeper recesses of the heart, kept by the Father, to whom you entrusted yourself. But just this is the work that with each new day has to be renewed for the day-the distinct renewal of surrender and trust for the life of moment by moment. God has gathered up the moments and bound them up into a bundle, for the very purpose that we might take measure of them. As we look forward in the morning, or look back in the evening, and weigh the moments, we learn how to value and how to use them rightly. And even as the Father, with each new morning, meets you with the promise of just sufficient manna for the day for yourself and those who have to partake with you, meet Him with the bright and loving renewal of your acceptance of the position He has given you in His beloved Son. Accustom yourself to look upon this as one of the reasons for the appointment of day and night. God thought of our weakness, and sought to provide for it. Let each day have its value from your calling to abide in Christ. As its light opens on your waking eyes, accept it on these terms: A day, just one day only, but still a day, given to abide and grow up in Jesus Christ. Whether it be a day of health or sickness, joy or sorrow, rest or work, of struggle or victory, let the chief thought with which you receive it in the morning thanksgiving be this: "A day that the Father gave; in it I may, I must become more closely united to Jesus." As the Father asks, "Can you trust me just for this one day to keep you abiding in Jesus, and Jesus to keep you fruitful?" you cannot but give the joyful response: "I will trust and not be afraid."

The day's portion for its day was given to Israel in the morning very early. The portion was for use and nourishment during the whole day, but the giving and the getting of it was the morning's work. This suggests how greatly the power to spend a day aright, to abide all the day in Jesus, depends on the morning hour. If the first-fruits be holy, the lump is holy. During the day there come hours of intense occupation in the rush of business or the throng of men, when only the Father's keeping can maintain the connection with Jesus unbroken. The morning manna fed all the day; it is only when the believer in the morning secures his quiet time in secret to renew distinctly and effectually loving fellowship with his Saviour, that the abiding can be kept up all the day. But what cause for thanksgiving that it may be done! In the morning, with its freshness and quiet, the believer can look out upon the day. He can consider its duties and its temptations, and pass them through beforehand, as it were, with his Saviour, throwing all upon Him who has undertaken to be everything to him. Christ is his manna, his nourishment, his strength, his life: he can take the day's portion for the day, Christ as his for all the needs the day may bring, and go on in the assurance that the day will be one of blessing and of growth.

And then, as the lesson of the value and the work of the single day is being taken to heart, the learner is all unconsciously being led on to get the secret of "day by day continually" (Exodus 29:38). The blessed abiding grasped by faith for each day apart is an unceasing and ever-increasing growth. Each day of faithfulness brings a blessing for the next; makes both the trust and the surrender easier and more blessed. And so the Christian life grows: as we give our whole heart to the work ofeach day, it becomes all the day, and from that eve day. And so each day separately, all the day continually, day by day successively, we abide in Jesus. And the days make up the life: what once appeared too high and too great to attain, is given to the soul that was content to take and use "every day his portion" (Ezra 3:4), "as the duty of every day required." Even here on earth the voice is heard: "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over few, I will make thee ruler over many: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Our daily life becomes a wonderful interchange of God's daily grace and our daily praise: "Daily He loadeth us with His benefits"; "that I may daily perform my vows." We learn to understand God's reason for daily giving, as He most certainly gives, only enough, but also fully enough, for each day. And we get into His way, the way of daily asking and expecting only enough, but most certainly fully enough, for the day. We begin to number our days not from the sun's rising over the world, or by the work we do or the food we eat, but the daily renewal of the miracle of the manna-the blessedness of daily fellowship with Him who is the

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Abide in Christ

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Chapter 16

FORSAKING ALL FOR HIM

"I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found IN Him. PHIL.3:8-9.

WHEREVER there is life, there is a continual interchange of taking in and giving out, receiving and restoring. The nourishment I take is given out again in the work I do; the impressions I receive, in the thoughts and feelings I express. The one depends on the other-the giving out ever increases the power of taking in. In the healthy exercise of giving and taking is all the enjoyment of life.

It is so in the spiritual life too. There are Christians who look on its blessedness as consisting all in the privilege of ever receiving; they know not how the capacity for receiving is only kept up and enlarged by continual giving up and giving out-how it is only in the emptiness that comes from the parting with what we have, that the divine fulness can flow in. It was a truth our Saviour continually insisted on. When He spoke of selling all to secure the treasure, of losing our life to find it, of the hundred-fold to those who forsake all, He was expounding the need of selfsacrifice as the law of the Kingdom for Himself as well as for His disciples. If we are really to abide in Christ, and to be found in Him-to have our life always and wholly in Him-we must each in our measure say with Paul, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, that I may win Christ, and be POUND IN Him."

Let us try and see what there is to be forsaken and given up. First of all, there is sin. There can be no true conversion without the giving up of sin. And yet, owing to the ignorance of the young convert of what really is sin, of what the claims of God's holiness are, and what the extent to which the power of Jesus can enable us to conquer sin, the giving up of sin is but partial and superficial. With the growth of the Christian life there comes the want of a deeper and more entire purging out of everything that is unholy. And it is specially when the desire to abide in Christ uninterruptedly, to be always found in Him, becomes strong, that the soul is led to see the need of a new act of surrender, in which it afresh accepts and ratifies its death to sin in Christ, and parts indeed with everything that is sin. Availing himself, in the strength of God's Spirit, of that wonderful power of our nature by which the whole of one's future life can be gathered up and disposed of in one act of the will, the believer yields himself to sin no more-to be only and wholly a servant of righteousness. He does it in the joyful assurance that every sin surrendered is gain indeed-room for the inflowing of the presence and the love of Christ.

Next to the parting with unrighteousness, is the giving up of selfrighteousness. Though contending most earnestly against our own works or merits, it is often long before we come really to understand what it is to refuse self the least place or right in the service of God. Unconsciously we allow the actings of our own mind and heart and will free scope in God's presence. In prayer and worship, in Bible reading and working for God, instead of absolute dependence on the Holy Spirit's leading, self is expected to do a work it never can do. We are slow to learn the lesson, "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." As it is learnt, and we see how corruption extends to everything that is of nature, we see that there can be no entire abiding in Christ without the giving up of all that is

of self in religion-without giving it up to the death, and waiting for the breathings of the Holy Spirit as alone able to work in us what is acceptable in God's sight.

Then, again, there is our whole natural life, with all the powers and endowments bestowed upon us by the Creator, with all the occupations and interests with which Providence has surrounded us. It is not enough that, when once you are truly converted, you have the earnest desire to have all these devoted to the service of the Lord. The desire is good, but can neither teach the way nor give the strength to do it acceptably. Incalculable harm has been done to the deeper spirituality of the Church, by the idea that when once we are God's children the using of our gifts in His service follows as a matter of course. No; for this there is indeed needed very special grace. And the way in which the grace comes is again that of sacrifice and surrender. I must see how all my gifts and powers are, even though I be a child of God, still defiled by sin, and under the power of the flesh. I must feel that I cannot at once proceed to use them for God's glory. I must first lay them at Christ's feet, to be accepted and cleansed by Him. I must feel myself utterly powerless to use them aright. I must see that they are most dangerous to me, because through them the flesh, the old nature, self, will so easily exert its power. In this conviction I must part with them, giving them entirely up to the Lord. When He has accepted them, and set His stamp upon them, I receive them back, to hold them as His property, to wait on Him for the grace to use them aright day by day, and to have them act only under His influence. And so experience proves it true here too, that the path of entire consecration is the path of full salvation. Not only is what is thus given up received back again to become doubly our own, but the forsaking all is followed by the receiving all. We abide in Christ more fully as we forsake all and follow Him. As I count all things loss for His sake, I am found IN Him.

The same principle holds good of all the lawful occupations and possessions with which we are entrusted of God. Such were the fish-nets on the Sea of Galilee, and the household duties of Martha of Bethany -the home and the friends of many a one among Jesus' disciples. Jesus taught them in very deed to forsake all for Him. It was no arbitrary command, but the simple application of a law in nature to the Kingdom of His grace-that the more perfectly the old occupant is cast out, the more complete can be the possession of the new, and the more entire the renewal of all within.

This principle has a still deeper application. The truly spiritual gifts which are the working of God's own Holy Spirit within usthese surely need not be thus given up and surrendered? They do indeed; the interchange of giving up and taking in is a life process, and may not cease for a moment. No sooner does the believer begin to rejoice in the possession of what he has, than the inflow of new grace is retarded, and stagnation threatens. It is only into the thirst of an empty soul that the streams of living waters flow. Ever thirsting is the secret of never thirsting. Each blessed experience we receive as a gift of God, must at once be returned back to Him from whom it came, in praise and love, in self-sacrifice and service; so only can it be restored to us again, fresh and beautiful with the bloom of heaven. Is not this the wonderful lesson Isaac on Moriah teaches us? Was he not the son of promise, the God-given life, the wonder-gift of the omnipotence of Him who quickeneth the dead? (Rom.4:17). And yet even he had to be given up, and sacrificed, that he might be received back again a thousandfold more precious than before-a type of the Only-begotten of the Father, whose pure and holy life had to be given up ere He could receive it again in resurrection power, and could make Ibis people partakers of it. A type, too, of what takes place in the life of each believer, as, instead of resting content with past experiences or present grace, he presses on, forgetting and giving up all that is behind, and reaches out to the fullest possible apprehension of Christ His life.

And such surrender of all for Christ, is it a single step, the act and experience of a moment, or is it a course of daily renewed and progressive attainment? It is both. There may be a moment in the life of a believer when he gets a first sight, or a deeper insight, of this most blessed truth, and when, made willing in the day of God's power, he does indeed, in an act of the will, gather up the whole of life yet before him into the decision of a

moment, and lay himself on the altar a living and an acceptable sacrifice. Such moments have often been the blessed transition from a life of wandering and failure to a life of abiding and power divine. But even then his daily life becomes, what the life must be of each one who has no such experience, the unceasing prayer for more light on the meaning of entire surrender, the ever-renewed offering up of all he has to God.

Believer, would you abide in Christ, see here the blessed path. Nature shrinks back from such selfdenial and crucifixion in its rigid application to our life in its whole extent. But what nature does not love and cannot perform, grace will accomplish, and make to you a life of joy and glory. Do you but yield up yourself to Christ your Lord; the conquering power of His incoming presence will make it joy to cast out all that before was most precious. "A hundredfold in this life" this word of the Master comes true to all who, with whole-hearted faithfulness, accept His commands to forsake all. The blessed receiving soon makes the giving up most blessed too. And the secret of a life of close abiding will be seen to be simply this: As I give myself wholly to Christ, I find the power to take Him wholly for myself; and as I lose myself and all I have for Him, He takes me wholly for Himself, and gives Himself wholly to me.

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 17

THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT

"The anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you; and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." -I JOHN 2:27.

How beautiful the thought of a life always abiding in Christ! The longer we think of it, the more attractive it becomes. And yet how often it is that the precious words, "Abide in me," are heard by the young disciple with a sigh! It is as if he understands so little what they really mean, and can realize so little how this full enjoyment can be attained. He longs for some one who could make it perfectly clear, and continually again remind him that the abiding is in very deed within his reach. If such an one would but listen to the word we have from John this day, what hope and joy it would bring! It gives us the divine assurance that we have the anointing of the Holy Spirit to teach us all things, also to teach us how to abide in Christ.

Alas! someone answers, this word does not give me comfort, it only depresses me more. For it tells of another privilege I so little know to enjoy: I do not understand how the teaching of the Spirit is givenwhere or how I can discern His voice. If the Teacher is so unknown, no wonder that the promise of His teaching about the abiding does not help me much.

Thoughts like these come from an error which is very common among believers. They imagine that the Spirit, in teaching them, must reveal the mysteries of the spiritual life first to their intellect, and afterwards in their experience. And God's way is just the contrary of this. What holds true of all spiritual truth is specially true of the abiding in Christ: We must live and experience truth in order to know it. Life-fellowship with Jesus is the only school for the science of heavenly things. "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter," is a law of the Kingdom, specially true of the daily cleansing of which it first was spoken, and the daily keeping. Receive what you do not comprehend, submit to what you cannot understand, accept and expect what to reason appears a mystery, believe what looks impossible, walk in a way which you know notsuch are the first lessons in the school of God. "If ye abide in my word, ye shall understand the truth": in these and other words of God we are taught that there is a habit of mind and life which precedes the understanding of the truth. True discipleship consists in first following, and then knowing the Lord. The believing surrender to Christ, and the submission to His word to expect what appears most improbable, is the only way to the full blessedness of knowing Him.

These principles hold specially good in regard to the teaching of the Spirit. That teaching consists in His guiding the spiritual life within us to that which God has prepared for us, without our always knowing how. On the strength of God's promise, and trusting in His faithfulness, the believer yields himself to the leading of the Holy Spirit, without claiming to have it first made clear to the intellect what He is to do, but consenting to let Him do His work in the soul, and afterwards to know what He has wrought there. Faith trusts the working of the Spirit unseen in the deep recesses of the inner life. And so the word of Christ and the gift of the Spirit are to the believer sufficient guarantee that He will be taught of the Spirit to abide in Christ. By faith he rejoices in what he does not see or feel: he knows, and is confident that the blessed Spirit within is doing His work silently but surely, guiding

him into the life of full abiding and unbroken communion. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus; it is His work, not only to breathe, but ever to foster and strengthen, and so to perfect the new life within. And just in proportion as the believer yields himself in simple trust to the unseen, but most certain law of the Spirit of life working within him, his faith will pass into knowledge. It will be rewarded by the Spirit's light revealing in the Word what has already been wrought by the Spirit's power in the life.

Apply this now to the promise of the Spirit's teaching us to abide in Christ. The Holy Spirit is indeed the mighty power of God. And He comes to us from the heart of Christ, the bearer of Christ's life, the revealer and communicator of Christ Himself within us. In the expression, "the fellowship of the Spirit," we are taught what His highest work is. He is the bond of fellowship between the Father and the Son: by Him they are one. He is the bond of fellowship between all believers: by Him they are one. Above all, He is the bond of fellowship between Christ and believers ; He is the life-sap through which Vine and branch grow into real and living oneness: by Him we are one. And we can be assured of it, that if we do but believe in His presence and working, if we do but watch not to grieve Him, because we know that He is in us, if we wait and pray to be filled with Him, He will teach us how to abide. First guiding our will to a whole-hearted cleaving to Christ, then quickening our faith into ever larger confidence and expectation, then breathing into our hearts a peace and joy that pass understanding, He teaches us to abide, we scarce know how. Then coming through the heart and life into the understanding, He makes us know the truth-not as mere thought-truth, but as the truth which is in Christ Jesus, the reflection into the mind of the light of what He has already made a reality in the life. "The life was the light of men."

In view of such teaching, it is clear how, if we would have the Spirit to guide us into the abiding life, our first need is-quiet restful faith. Amid all the questionsand difficulties that may come up in connection withour striving to abide in Christ-amid all the longing wemay sometimes feel to have a Christian of experience to aid us-amid the frequent painful consciousness offailure, of ignorance, of helplessness-do let us holdfast the blessed confidence: We have the unction of theHoly One to teach us to abide in Him. "THE ANOINTING which ye have received of Him, ABIDETH IN you; andeven as it hath taught you, YE SHALL ABIDE IN Him. "Make this teaching of His in connection with the abidinga matter of special exercise of faith. Believe that assurely as you have part in Christ, you have His Spirittoo. Believe that He will do His work with power, if only you do not hinder Him. Believe that He is working,even when you cannot discern it. Believe that He will.work mightily if you ask this from the Father. It isimpossible to live the life of full abiding without being fullof the the Holy Spirit; believe that the fulness of the Spirit is indeed your daily portion. Be sure and take time in prayer to dwell at the footstool of the throne of Godand the Lamb, whence flows the river of the water of life. It is there, and only there, that you can be filled with the Spirit. Cultivate carefully the habit of daily,yea, continually honouring Him by the quiet, restfulconfidence that He is doing His work within. Let faithin His indwelling make you jealous of whatever could grieve Him-the spirit of the world or the actings ofself and the flesh. Let that faith seek its nourishment in the Word and all it says of the Spirit, His power, His comfort, and His work. Above all, let that faith in the Spirit's indwelling lead you specially, to look away to Jesus; as we have received the anointing of Him, it comes in ever stronger flow from Him as we are occupied with Him alone. Christ is the Anointed One. As we look up to Him, the holy anointing comes, "the precious ointment upon the head of Aaron, that went down to the skirts of his garments." It is faith in Jesus that brings the anointing; the anointing leads to Jesus, and to the abiding in Him alone.

Believer, abide in Christ, in the power of the Spirit. What think you, ought the abiding longer to be a fear or a burden? Surely not. Oh, if we did but know the graciousness of our Holy Comforter, and the blessedness of wholly yielding ourselves to His leading, we should indeed experience the divine comfort of having such a teacher to secure our biding in Christ. The Holy Spirit was given for this one purpose-that the glorious redemption and life in Christ might with divine power be conveyed and communicated to us. We have the Holy Spirit to

make the living Christ, in all His saving power, and in the completeness of His victory over sin, ever present within us. It is this that constitutes Him the Comforter: with Him we need never mourn an absent Christ. Let us therefore, as often as we read, or meditate, or pray in connection with this abiding in Christ, reckon upon it as a settled thing that we have the Spirit of God Himself within us, teaching, and guiding, and working. Let us rejoice in the confidence that we must succeed in our desires, because the Holy Spirit is working all the while with secret but divine power in the soul that does not hinder Him by its unbelief.

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 18

IN STILLNESS OF SOUL

"In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength. "-Isaih 30:15

"Be silent to the Lord, and wait patiently for him."-Ps.37:7

"Truly my soul is silent unto God."-Ps.62:1

THERE is a view of the Christian life that regards it as a sort of partnership, in which God and man have each to do their part. It admits that it is but little that man can do, and that little defiled with sin; still he must do his utmost-then only can he expect God to do His part. To those who think thus,it is extremely difficult to understand what Scripture means when it speaks of our being still and doing nothing, of our resting and waiting to see the salvation of God. It appears to them a perfect contradiction, when we speak of this quietness and ceasing from all effort as the secret of the highest activity of man and all his powers. And yet this is just what Scripture does teach. The explanation of the apparent mystery is to be found in this, that when God and man are spoken of as working together, there is nothing of the idea of a partnership between two partners who each contribute their share to a work. The relation is a very different one. The true idea is that of cooperation founded on subordination. As Jesus was entirely dependent on the Father for all His words and all His works, so the believer can do nothing of himself. What he can do of himself is altogether sinful. He must therefore cease entirely from his own doing, and wait for the working of God in him. As he ceases from self-effort, faith assures him that God does what He has undertaken, and works in him. And what God does is to renew, to sanctify, and waken all his energies to their highest power. So that just in proportion as he yields himself a truly passive instrument in the hand of God, will he be wielded of God as the active instrument of His almighty power. The soul in which the wondrous combination of perfect passivity with the highest activity is most completely realized, has the deepest experience of what the Christian life is.

Among the lessons to be learnt of those who are studying the blessed art of abiding in Christ, there is none more needful and more profitable than this one of stillness of soul. In it alone can we cultivate that teachableness of spirit, to which the Lord will reveal His secrets-that meekness to which He shows His ways. It is the spirit exhibited so beautifully in all the three Marys: In her whose only answer to the most wonderful revelation ever made to human being was, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word"; and of whom, as mysteries multiplied around her, it is written: "Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart." And in her who "sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word," and who showed, in the anointing Him for His burial, how she had entered more deeply into the mystery of His death than even the beloved disciple. And in her, too, who sought her Lord in the house of the Pharisee, with tears that spake more than words. It is a soul silent unto God that is the best preparation for knowing Jesus, and for holding fast the blessings He bestows. It is when the soul is hushed in silent awe and worship before the Holy Presence that reveals itself within, that the still small voice of the blessed Spirit will be heard.

Therefore, beloved Christian, as often as you seek to understand better the blessed mystery of abiding in Christ, let this be your first thought (Ps.62:5, marg.): "My soul, only be silent unto God; for my expectation is from Him." Do you in very deed hope to realize the wondrous union with the Heavenly Vine? Know that flesh and blood cannot reveal it unto you, but only the Father in heaven. "Cease from thine own wisdom." You have but to bow in the confession of your own ignorance and impotence; the Father will delight to give you the teaching of the Holy Spirit. If but your ear be open, and your thoughts brought into subjection, and your heart prepared in silence to wait upon God, and to hear what He speaks, fie will reveal to you His secrets. And one of the first secrets will be the deeper insight into the truth, that as you sink low before Him in nothingness and helplessness, in a silence and a stillness of soul that seeks to catch the faintest whisper of His love, teachings will come to you which you had never heard before for the rush and noise of your own thoughts and efforts. You shall learn how your great work is to listen, and hear, and believe what He promises; to watch and wait and see what He does; and then, in faith, and worship, and obedience, to yield yourself to His working who works in you mightily.

One would think that no message could be more beautiful or welcome than this, that we may rest and be quiet, and that our God will work for us and in us. And yet how far this is from being the case! And how slow many are to learn that quietness is blessedness, that quietness is strength, that quietness is the source of the highest activity- the secret of all true abiding in Christ! Let us try to learn it, and to watch against whatever interferes with it. The dangers that threaten the soul's rest are not a few.

There is the dissipation of soul which comes from entering needlessly and too deeply into the interests of this world. Every one of us has his divine calling; and within the circle pointed out by God Himself, interest in our work and its surroundings is a duty. But even here the Christian needs to exercise watchfulness and sobriety. And still more do we need a holy temperance in regard to things not absolutely imposed upon us by God. If abiding in Christ really be our first aim, let us beware of all needless excitement. Let us watch even in lawful and necessary things against the wondrous power these have to keep the soul so occupied, that there remains but little power or zest for fellowship with God. Then there is the restlessness and worry that come of care and anxiety about earthly things; these eat away the life of trust, and keep the soul likea troubled sea. There the gentle whispers of the Holy Comforter cannot be heard.

No less hurtful is the spirit of fear and distrust in spiritual things; with its apprehensions and its efforts, it never comes really to hear what God has to say. Above all, there is the unrest that comes of seeking in our own way and in our own strength the spiritual blessing which comes alone from above. The heart occupied with its own plans and efforts for doing God's will, and securing the blessing of abiding in Jesus, must, fail continually. God's work is hindered by our interference. He can do His work perfectly only when the soul ceases from its work. He will do His work mightily in the soul that honours Him by expecting Him to work both to will and to do.

And, last of all, even when the soul seeks truly to enter the way of faith, there is the impatience of the flesh, which forms its judgment of the life and progress of the soul not after the divine but the human standard.

In dealing with all this, and so much more, blessed the man who learns the lesson of stillness, and fully accepts God's word: "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." Each time he listens to theword of the Father, or asks the Father to listen to his words, he dares not begin his Bible reading or prayer without first pausing and waiting, until the soul be hushed in the presence of the Eternal Majesty. Under a sense of the divine nearness, the soul, feeling how self is always ready to assert itself, and intrude even into the holiest of all with its thoughts and efforts, yields itself in a quiet act of self-surrender to the teaching and working of the divine Spirit. It is still and waits in holy silence, until all is calm and ready to receive the revelation of the divine will and presence. Its reading and prayer then indeed become a waiting on God with ear and heart opened and purged to receive fully

only what He says.

"Abide in Christ!" Let no one think that he can do this if he has not daily his quiet time, his seasons of meditation and waiting on God. In these a habit of soul must be cultivated, in which the believer goes out into the world and its distractions, the peace of God, that passeth all understanding, keeping the heart and mind. It is in such a calm and restful soul that the life of faith can strike deep root, that the Holy Spirit can give His blessed teaching, that the Holy Father can accomplish His glorious work. May each one of us learn every day to say, "Truly my soul is silent unto God." And may every feeling of the difficulty of attaining this only lead us simply to look and trust to Him whose presence makes even the storm a calm. Cultivate the quietness as a means to the abiding in Christ; expect the ever deepening quietness and calm of heaven in the soul as the fruit of abiding in Him.

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 19

IN AFFLICTION AND TRIAL

"Every branch that bearest fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."-JOHN 15:2.

IN THE whole plant world there is not a tree to be found so specially suited to the image of man in his relation to God, as the vine. There is none of which the fruit and its juice are so full of spirit, so quickening and stimulating. But there is also none of which the natural tendency is so entirely evil-none where the growth is so ready to run into wood that is utterly worthless except for the fire. Of all plants, not one needs the pruning knife so unsparingly and so unceasingly. None is so dependent on cultivation and training, but with this none yields a richer reward to the husbandman. In His wonderful parable, the Saviour, with a single word, refers to this need of pruning in the vine, and the blessing it brings. But from that single word what streams of light pour in upon this dark world, so full of suffering and of sorrow to believers! What treasures of teaching and comfort to the bleeding branch in its hour of trial: "Every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." And so He has prepared His people, who are so ready when trial comes to be shaken in their confidence, and to be moved from their abiding in Christ, to hear in each affliction the voice of a messenger that comes to call them to abide still more closely. Yes, believer, mostspecially in times of trial,abide in Christ.

Abide in Christ! This is indeed the Father's object in sending the trial. In the storm the tree strikes deeper roots in the soil; in the hurricane the inhabitants of the house abide within, and rejoice in its shelter. So by suffering the Father would lead us to enter more deeply into the love of Christ. Our hearts are continually prone to wander from Him; prosperity and enjoyment all too easily satisfy us, dull our spiritual perception, and unfit us for full communion with Himself. It is an unspeakable mercy that the Father comes with His chastisement, makes the world round us all dark and unattractive, leads us to feel more deeply our sinfulness, and for a time lose our joy in what was becoming so dangerous. He does it in the hope that, when we have found our rest in Christ in time of trouble, we shall learn to choose abiding in Him as our only portion; and when the affliction is removed, have so grown more firmly into Him, that in prosperity He still shall be our only joy. So much has He set His heart on this, that though He has indeed no pleasure in afflicting us, He will not keep back even the most painful chastisement if He can but thereby guide His beloved child to comehome and abide in the beloved Son. Christian! pray for grace to see in every trouble, small or great, the Father's finger pointing to Jesus, and saying, Abide in Him.

Abide in Christ: so will you become partaker of all the rich blessings God designed for you in the affliction. The purposes of God's wisdom will become clear to you, your assurance of the unchangeable love become stronger, and the power of His Spirit fulfil you the promise: "He chasteneth us for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness." Abide in Christ: and your cross becomes the means of fellowship with His cross, and access into its mysteries-the mystery of the curse which He bore for you, of the death to sin in which you partake with Him, of the love in which, as sympathizing High Priest, He descended into all your sorrows. Abide in Christ: growing in conformity to your blessed Lord in His sufferings, deeper experience of the reality and the tenderness of His love will be yours. Abide in Christ: in the fiery oven, one like the Son of Man will be seen as never before; the purging

away of the dross and the refining of the gold will be accomplished, and Christ's own likeness reflected in you. O abide in Christ: the power of the flesh will be mortified, the impatience and selfwill of the old nature be humbled, to make place for the meekness and gentleness of Christ. A believer may pass through much affliction, and yet secure but little blessing from it all. Abiding in Christ is the secret of securing all that the Father meant the chastisement to bring us.

Abide in Christ: in Him you shall find sure and abundant consolation. With the afflicted comfort is often first, and the profit of the affliction second. The Father loves us so, that with Him our real and abiding profit is His first object, but He does not forget to comfort too. When He comforts it is that He may turn the bleeding heart to Himself to receive the blessing in fellowship with Him; when He refuses comfort, His object is still the same. It is in making us partakers of His holiness that true comfort comes. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter, not only because He can suggest comforting thoughts of God's love, but far more, because He makes us holy, and brings us into close union with Christ and with God. He teaches us to abide in Christ; and because God is found there, the truest comfort will come there too. In Christ the heart of the Father is revealed, and higher comfort there cannot be than to rest in the Father's bosom. In Him the fulness of the divine love is revealed, combined with the tenderness of a mother's compassion-and what can comfort like this? In Him you see a thousand times more given you than you have lost; see how God only took from you that you might have room to take from Him what is so much better. In Him suffering is consecrated, and becomes the foretaste of eternal glory; in suffering it is that the Spirit of God and of glory rests on us. Believer! would you have comfort in affliction?-Abide in Christ.

Abide in Christ: so will you bear much fruit. Not a vine is planted but the owner thinks of the fruit, and the fruit only. Other trees may be planted for ornament, for the shade, for the wood-the vine only for the_ fruit. And of each vine the husbandman is continually asking how it can bring forth more fruit, much fruit. Believer! abide in Christ in times of affliction, and you shall bring forth more fruit. The deeper experience of Christ's tenderness and the Father's love will urge you to live to His glory. The surrender of self and selfwill in suffering will prepare you to sympathize with the misery of others, while the softening that comes of chastisement will fit you for becoming, as Jesus was, the servant of all. The thought of the Father's desire for fruit in the pruning will lead you to yield yourself afresh, and more than ever, to Him, and to say that now you have but one object in life-making known and conveying His wonderful love to fellow-men. You shall learn the blessed art of forgetting self, and, even in affliction, availing yourself of your separation from ordinary life to plead for the welfare of others. Dear Christian, in affliction abide in Christ. When you see it coming, meet it in Christ; when it is come, feel that you are more in Christ than in it, for He is nearer you than affliction ever can be; when it is passing, still abide in Him. And let the one thought of the Saviour, as He speaks of the pruning, and the one desire of the Father, as He does the pruning, be yours too: "Every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth, that it may bring forth more fruit."

So shall your times of affliction become your times of choicest blessing-preparation for richest fruitfulness. Led into closer fellowship with the Son of God, and deeper experience of His love and grace-established in the blessed confidence that He and you entirely belong to each other-more completely satisfied with Him and more wholly given up to Him than ever before-with your own will crucified afresh, and the heart brought into deeper harmony with God's will-you shall be a vessel cleansed, meet for the Master's use, prepared for every good work. True believer! O try and learn the blessed truth, that in affliction your first, your only, your blessed calling is to abide in Christ. Be much with Him alone. Beware of the comfort and the distractions that friends so often bring. Let Jesus Christ Himself be your chief companion and comforter. Delight yourself in the assurance that closer union with Him, and more abundant fruit through Him, are sure to be the results of trial, because it is the Husbandman Himself who is pruning, and will ensure the fulfilment of the desire of the soul that yields itself lovingly to His work.

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 20

THAT YOU MAY BEAR MUCH FRUIT

"He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."-JOHN 15:5, 8.

WE ALL know what fruit is. The produce of the branch, by which men are refreshed and nourished. The fruit is not for the branch, but for those who come to carry it away. As soon as the fruit is ripe, the branch gives it off, to commence afresh its work of beneficence, and anew prepare its fruit for another season. A fruit-bearing tree lives not for itself, but wholly for those to whom its fruit brings refreshment and life. And so the branch exists only and entirely for the sake of the fruit. To make glad the heart of the husbandman is its object, its safety, and its glory.

Beautiful image of the believer, abiding in Christ! He not only grows in strength, the union with the Vine becoming ever surer and firmer, he also bears fruit, yea, much fruit. He has the power to offer that to others of which they can eat and live. Amid all who surround him he becomes like a tree of life, of which they can taste and be refreshed. He is in his circle a centre of life and of blessing, and that simply because he abides in Christ, and receives from Him the Spirit and the life of which he can impart to others. Learn thus, if you would bless others, to abide in Christ, and that if you do abide, you shall surely bless. As surely as the branch abiding in a fruitful vine bears fruit, so surely, yea, much more surely, will a soul abiding in Christ with His fulness of blessing be made a blessing.

The reason of this is easily understood. If Christ, the heavenly Vine, has taken the believer as a branch, then He has pledged Himself, in the very nature of things, to supply the sap and spirit and nourishment to make it bring forth fruit. "From ME is thy fruit found": these words derive new meaning from our parable. The soul need but have one care-to abide closely, fully, wholly. He will give the fruit. He works all that is needed to make the believer a blessing.

Abiding in Him, you receive of Him His Spirit of love and compassion towards sinners, making you desirous to seek their good. By nature the heart is full of selfishness. Even in the believer, his own salvation and happiness are often too much his only object. But abiding in Jesus, you come into contact with His infinite love; its fire begins to burn within your heart; you see the beauty of love; you learn to look upon loving and serving and saving your fellow-men as the highest privilege a disciple of Jesus can have. Abiding in Christ, your heart learns to feel the wretchedness of the sinner still in darkness, and the fearfulness of the dishonour done to your God. With Christ you begin to bear the burden of souls, the burden of sins not your own. As you are more closely united to Him, somewhat of that passion for souls which urged Him to Calvary begins to breathe within you, and you are ready to follow His footsteps, to forsake the heaven of your own happiness, and devote your life to win the souls Christ has taught you to love. The very spirit of the Vine is love; the spirit of love streams into the branch that abides in Him.

The desire to be a blessing is but the beginning. As you undertake to work, you speedily become conscious of

your own weakness and the difficulties in your way. Souls are not saved at your bidding. You are ready to be discouraged, and to relax your effort. But abiding in Christ, you receive new courage and strength for the work. Believing what Christ teaches, that it is HE who through you will give His blessing to the world, you understand that you are but the feeble instrument through which the hidden power of Christ does its work, that His strength may be perfected and made glorious in your weakness. It is a great step when the believer fully consents to his own weakness, and the abiding consciousness of it, and so works faithfully on, fully assured that his Lord is working through him. He rejoices that the excellence of the power is of God, and not of us. Realizing his oneness with his Lord, he considers no longer his own weakness, but counts on the power of Him of whose hidden working within he is assured. It is this secret assurance that gives a brightness to his look, and a gentle firmness to his tone, and a perseverance to all his efforts, which of themselves are great means of influencing those he is seeking to win. He goes forth in the spirit of one to whom victory is assured; for this is the victory that overcometh, even our faith. He no longer counts it humility to say that God cannot bless his unworthy efforts. He claims and expects a blessing, because it is not he, but Christ in him, that worketh. The great secret of abiding in Christ is the deep conviction that we are nothing, and He is everything. As this is learnt, it no longer seems strange to believe that our weakness need be no hindrance to His saving power. The believer who yields himself wholly up to Christ for service in the spirit of a simple, childlike trust, will assuredly bring forth much fruit. He will not fear even to claim his share in the wonderful promise: "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to the Father." He no longer thinks that He cannot have a blessing, and must be kept unfruitful, that he may be kept humble. He sees that the most heavily laden branches bow the lowest down. Abiding in Christ, he has yielded assent to the blessed agreement between the Vine and the branches, that of the fruit all the glory shall be to the Husbandman, the blessed Father.

Let us learn two lessons. If we are abiding in Jesus, let us begin to work. Let us first seek to influence those around us in daily life. Let us accept distinctly and joyfully our holy calling, that we are even now to live as the servants of the love of Jesus to our fellowmen. Our daily life must have for its object the making of an impression favourable to Jesus. When you look at the branch, you see at once the likeness to the Vine. We must live so that somewhat of the holiness and the gentleness of Jesus may shine out in us. We must live to represent Him. As was the case with Him when on earth, the life must prepare the way for the teaching. What the Church and the world both need is this: men and women full of the Holy Ghost and of love, who, as the living embodiments of the grace and power of Christ, witness for Him, and for His power on behalf of those who believe in Him. Living so, with our hearts longing to have Jesus glorified in the souls He is seeking after, let us offer ourselves to Him for direct work. There is work in our own home. There is work among the sick, the poor, and the outcast. There is work in a hundred different paths which the Spirit of Christ opens up through those who allow themselves to be led by Him. There is work perhaps for us in ways that have not yet been opened up by others. Abiding in Christ, let us work. Let us work, not like those who are content if they now follow the fashion, and take some share in religious work. No; let us work as those who are growing more like Christ, because they are abiding in Him, and who, like Him, count the work of winning souls to the Father the very joy and glory of heaven begun on earth.

And the second lesson is: If you work, abide in Christ. This is one of the blessings of work if done in the right spirit-it will deepen your union with your blessed Lord. It will discover your weakness, and throw you back on His strength. It will stir you to much prayer; and in prayer for others is the time when the soul, forgetful of itself, unconsciously grows deeper into Christ. It will make clearer to you the true nature of branch-life; its absolute dependence, and at the same time its glorious sufficiencyindependent of all else, because dependent on Jesus. If you work, abide in Christ. There are temptations and dangers. Work for Christ has sometimes drawn away from Christ, and taken the place of fellowship with Him. Work can sometimes give a form of godliness without the power. As you work, abide in Christ. Let a living faith in Christ working in you be the secret spring of all your work; this will inspire at once humility and courage. Let the Holy Spirit of Jesus dwell in you as the Spirit of His

tender compassion and His divine power. Abide in Christ, and offer every faculty of your nature freely and unreservedly to Him, to sanctify it for Himself. If Jesus Christ is really to work through us, it needs an entire consecration of ourselves to Him, daily renewed. But we understand now, just this is abiding in Christ; just this it is that constitutes our highest privilege and happiness. To be a branch bearing much fruit-nothing less, nothing more-be this our only joy.

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 21

SO WILL YOU HAVE POWER IN PRAYER

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. "-JOHN 15:7.

PRAYER is both one of the means and one of the fruits of union to Christ. As a means it is of unspeakable importance. All the things of faith, all the pleadings of desire, all the yearnings after a fuller surrender, all the confessions of shortcoming and of sin, all the exercises in which the soul gives up self and clings to Christ, find their utterance in prayer. In each meditation on abiding in Christ, as some new feature of what Scripture teaches concerning this blessed life is apprehended, the first impulse of the believer is at once to look up to the Father and pour out the heart into His, and ask from Him the full understanding and the full possession of what he has been shown in the Word. And it is the believer, who is not content with this spontaneous expression of his hope, but who takes time in secret prayer to wait until he has received and laid hold of what he has seen, who will really grow strong in Christ. However feeble the soul's first abiding, its prayer will be heard, and it will find prayer one of the great means of abiding more abundantly.

But it is not so much as a means, but as a fruit of the abiding, that the Saviour mentions it in the parable of the Vine. He does not think so much of prayer-as we, alas! too exclusively do-as a means of getting blessing for ourselves, but as one of the chief channels of influence by which, through us as fellow-workers with God, the blessings of Christ's redemption are to be dispensed to the world. He sets before Himself and us the glory of the Father, in the extension of His Kingdom, as the object for which we have been made branches; and He assures us that if we but abide in Him, we shall be Israels, having power with God and man. Ours shall be the effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous man, availing much, like Elijah's for ungodly Israel. Such prayer will be the fruit of our abiding in Him, and the means of bringing forth much fruit.

To the Christian who is not abiding wholly in Jesus, the difficulties connected with prayer are often so great as to rob him of the comfort and the strength it could bring. Under the guise of humility, he asks how one so unworthy could expect to have influence with the Holy One. He thinks of God's sovereignty, His perfect wisdom and love, and cannot see how his prayer can really have any distinct effect. He prays, but it is more because he cannot rest without prayer, than from a loving faith that the prayer will be heard. But what a blessed release from such questions and perplexities is given to the soul who is truly abiding in Christ! He realizes increasingly how it is in the real spiritual unity with Christ that we are accepted and heard. The union with the Son of God is a life union: we are in very deed one with Him-our prayer ascends as His prayer. It is because we abide in Him that we can ask what we will, and it is given to us.

There are many reasons why this must be so. One is, that abiding in Christ, and having His words abiding in us, teach us to pray in accordance with the will of God. With the abiding in Christ our self-will is kept down, the thoughts and wishes of nature are brought into captivity to the thoughts and wishes of Christ; likemindedness to Christ grows upon us-all our working and willing become transformed into hannony with His. There is deep and

oft-renewed heart-searching to see whether the surrender has indeed been entire; fervent prayer to the heart-searching Spirit that nothing may be kept back. Everything is yielded to the power of His life in us, that it may exercise its sanctifying influence even on ordinary wishes and desires. His Holy Spirit breathes through our whole being; and without our being conscious how, our desires, as the breathings of the divine life, are in conformity with the divine will, and are fulfilled. Abiding in Christ renews and sanctifies the will: we ask what we will, and it is given to us.

In close connection with this is the thought, that the abiding in Christ teaches the believer in prayer on y to seek the glory of God. In promising to answer prayer, Christ's one thought (see John 14:13) is this, "that the Father may be glorified in the Son." In His intercession on earth (John 17), this was His one desire and plea; in His intercession in heaven, it is still His great object. As the believer abides in Christ, the Saviour breathes this desire into him. The thought, ONLY THE GLORY of GOD, becomes more and more the keynote of the life hid in Christ. At first this subdues, and quiets, and makes the soul almost afraid to dare entertain a wish, lest it should not be to the Father's glory. But when once its supremacy has been accepted, and everything yielded to it, it comes with mighty power to elevate and enlarge the heart, and open it to the vast field open to the glory of God. Abiding in Christ, the soul learns not only to desire, but spiritually to discern what will be for God's glory; and one of the first conditions of acceptable prayer is fulfilled in it when, as the fruit of its union with Christ, the whole mind is brought into harmony with that of the Son as He said: "Father, glorify Thy name."

Once more: Abiding in Christ, we can fully avail ourselves of the name of Christ. Asking in the name of another means that that other authorized me and sent me to ask, and wants to be considered as asking himself: he wants the favour done to him. Believers often try to think of the name of Jesus and His merits, and to argue themselves into the faith that they will be heard, while they painfully feel how little they have of the faith of His name. They are not living wholly in Jesus' name; it is only when they begin to pray that they want to take up that name and use it. This cannot be. The promise "Whatsoever ye ask in my name," may not be severed from the command, "Whatsoever ye do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." If the name of Christ is to be wholly at my disposal, so that I may have the full command of it for all I will, it must be because I first put myself wholly at His disposal, so that He has free and full command of me. It is the abiding in Christ that gives the right and power to use His name with confidence. To Christ the Father refuses nothing. Abiding in Christ, I come to the Father as one with Him. His righteousness is in me, His Spirit is in me; the Father sees the Son in me, and gives me my petition. It is not-as so many think-by a sort of imputation that the Father looks upon us as if we were in Christ, though we are not in Him. No; the Father wants to see us living in Him: thus shall our prayer really have power to prevail. Abiding in Christ not only renews the will to pray aright, but secures the full power of His merits to us.

Again: Abiding in Christ also works in us the faith that alone can obtain an answer. "According to your faith be it unto you": this is one of the laws of the kingdom. "Believe that ye receive, and ye shall have." This faith rests upon, and is rooted in the Word, but is something infinitely higher than the mere logical conclusion: God has promised, I shall obtain. No; faith, as a spiritual act, depends upon the words abiding in us as living powers, and so upon the state of the whole inner life.Without fasting and prayer (Mark 9:29), without humility and a spiritual mind (John 5:44), without a wholehearted obedience (1 John 3:22), there cannot be this living faith. But as the soul abides in Christ, and grows into the consciousness of its union with Him, and sees how entirely it is He who makes it and its petition acceptable, it dares to claim an answer because it knows itself one with Him. It was by faith it learnt to abide in Him; as the fruit of that faith, it rises to a larger faith in all that God has promised to be and to do. It learns to breathe its prayers in the deep, quiet, confident assurance: We know we have the petition we ask of Him.

Abiding in Christ, further, keeps us in the place where the answer can be bestowed. Some believers pray earnestly

for blessing; but when God comes and looks for them to bless them, they are not to be found. They never thought that the blessing must not only be asked, but waited for, and received in prayer. Abiding in Christ is the place for receiving answers. Out of Him the answer would be dangerous-we should consume it on our lusts (Jas. iv. 3). Many of the richest answers -say for spiritual grace, or for power to work and to blesscan only come in the shape of a larger experience of what God makes Christ to us. The fulness is IN Him; abiding in Him is the condition of power in prayer, because the answer is treasured up and bestowed in Him.

Believer, abide in Christ, for there is the school of prayer-mighty, effectual, answer-bringing prayer. Abide in Him, and you shall learn what to so many is a mystery: That the secret of the prayer of faith is the life of faith-the life that abides in Christ alone.

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 22

AND IN HIS LOVE

"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: abide ye in my love."--John 15:9.

Blessed Lord, enlighten our eyes to see aright the glory of this wondrous word. Open to our meditation the secret chamber of THY LOVE, that our souls may enter in, and find there their everlasting dwelling-place. How else shall we know aught of a love that passeth knowledge?

Before the Saviour speaks the word that invites us to abide in His love, He first tells us what that love is. What He says of it must give force to His invitation, and make the thought of not accepting it an impossibility: "As the Father hath loved me, so I have loved you!"

"As the Father hath loved me." How shall we be able to form right conceptions of this love? Lord, teach us. God is love. Love is His very being. Love is not an attribute, but the very essence of His nature, the centre round which all His glorious attributes gather. It was because He was love that He was the Father, and that there was a Son. Love needs an object to whom it can give itself away, in whom it can lose itself, with whom it can make itself one. Because God is love, there must be a Father and a Son. The love of the Father to the Son is that divine passion with which He delights in the Son, and speaks, "My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The divine love is as a burning fire; in all its intensity and infinity it has but one object and but one joy, and that is the onlybegotten Son. When we gather together all the attributes of God-His infinity, His perfection, His immensity, His majesty, His omnipotence-and consider them but as the rays of the glory of His love, we still fail in forming any conception of what that love must be. It is a love that passeth knowledge.

And yet this love of God to His Son must serve, O my soul, as the glass in which you are to learn how Jesus loves you. As one of His redeemed ones, you are His delight, and all His desire is to you, with the longing of a love which is stronger than death, and which many waters cannot quench. His heart yearns after you, seeking your fellowship and your love. Were it needed, He could die again to possess you. As the Father loved the Son, and could not live without Him, could not be God the blessed without Him-so Jesus loves you. His life is bound up in yours; you are to Him inexpressibly more indispensable and precious than you ever can know. You are one with Himself. "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." What a love!

It is an eternal love. From before the foundation of the world-God's Word teaches us this-the purpose had been formed that Christ should be the Head of His Church, that He should have a body in which His glory could be set forth. In that eternity He loved and longed for those who had been given Him by the Father; and when He came and told His disciples that He loved them, it was indeed not with a love of earth and of time, but with the love of eternity. And it is with that same infinite love that His eye still rests upon each of us here seeking to abide in Him, and in each breathing of that love there is indeed the power of eternity. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love."

It is a perfect love. It gives all, and holds nothing back. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand." And just so Jesus loves His own: all He has is theirs. When it was needed, He sacrificed His throne and crown for you: He did not count His own life and blood too dear to give for you. His righteousness, His Spirit, His glory, even His throne, all are yours. This love holds nothing, nothing back, but, in a manner which no human mind can fathom, makes you one with itself. O wondrous love! to love us even as the Father loved Him, and to offer us this love as our everyday dwelling.

It is a gentle and most tender love. As we think of the love of the Father to the Son, we see in the Son everything so infinitely worthy of that love. When we think of Christ's love to us, there is nothing but sin and unworthiness to meet the eye. And the question comes: How can that love within the bosom of the divine life and its perfections be compared to the love that rests on sinners? Can it indeed be the same love? Blessed be God, we know it is so. The nature of love is always one, however different the objects. Christ knows of no other law of love but that with which His Father loved Him. Our wretchedness only serves to call out more distinctly the beauty of love, such as could not be seen even in heaven. With the tenderest compassion He bows to our weakness, with patience inconceivable He bears with our slowness, with the gentlest loving-kindness He meets our fears and our follies. It is the love of the Father to the Son, beautified, glorified, in its condescension, in its exquisite adaptation to our needs.

And it is an unchangeable love. "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the end." "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee." The promise with which it begins its work in the soul is this: "I shall not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." And just as our wretchedness was what first drew it to us, so the sin, with which it is so often grieved, and which may well cause us to fear and doubt, is but a new motive for it to hold to us all the more. And why? We can give no reason but this: "As the Father hath loved me, so I have loved you."

And now, does not this love suggest the motive, the measure, and the means of that surrender by which we yield ourselves wholly to abide in Him?

This love surely supplies a motive. Only look and see how this love stands and pleads and prays. Gaze, O gaze on the divine form, the eternal glory, the heavenly beauty, the tenderly pleading gentleness of the crucified love, as it stretches out its pierced hands and says, "Oh, wilt thou not abide with me? wilt thou not come and abide in me?" It points you up to the eternity of love whence it came to seek you. It points you to the Cross, and all it has borne to prove the reality of its affection, and to win you for itself. It reminds you of all it has promised to do for you, if you will but throw yourself unreservedly into its arms. It asks you whether, so far as you have come to dwell with it and taste its blessedness, it has not done well by you. And with a divine authority, mingled with such an inexpressible tenderness that one might almost think he heard the tone of reproach in it, it says, "Soul, as the Father hath loved me, so I have loved you: abide in my love." Surely there can be but one answer to such pleading: Lord Jesus Christ! here I am. Henceforth Thy love shall be the only home of my soul: in Thy love alone will I abide.

That love is not only the motive, but also the measure, of our surrender to abide in it. Love gives all, but asks all. It does so, not because it grudges us aught, but because without this it cannot get possession of us to fill us with itself. In the love of the Father and the Son,it was so. In the love of Jesus to us, it was so. In our entering into His love to abide there, it must be so too; our surrender to it must have no other measure than its surrender to us. O that we understood how the love that calls us has infinite riches and fulness of joy for us, and that what we give up for its sake will be rewarded a hundredfold in this life! Or rather, would that we understood that it is a LOVE with a height and a depth and a length and a breadth that passes knowledge! How all thought of sacrifice or

surrender would pass away, and our souls be filled with wonder at the unspeakable privilege of being loved with such a love, of being allowed to come and abide in it for ever.

And if doubt again suggest the question: But is it possible, can I always abide in His love? listen how that love itself supplies the only means for the abiding in Him: It is faith in that love which will enable us to abide in it. If this love be indeed so divine, such an intense and burning passion, then surely I can depend on it to keep me and to hold me fast. Then surely all my unworthiness and feebleness can be no hindrance. If this love be indeed so divine, with infinite power at its command, I surely have a right to trust that it is stronger than my weakness; and that with its almighty arm it will clasp me to its bosom, and suffer me to go out no more. I see how this is the one thing my God requires of me. Treating me as a reasonable being endowed with the wondrous power of willing and choosing, He cannot force all this blessedness on me, but waits till I give the willing consent of the heart. And the token of this consent He has in His great kindness ordered faith to be-that faith by which utter sinfulness casts itself into the arms of love to be saved, and utter weakness to be kept and made strong. O Infinite Love! Love with which the Father loved the Son! Love with which the Son loves us! I can trust thee, I do trust thee. O keep me abiding in Thyself.

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 23

AS CHRIST IN THE FATHER

"As the Father hath loved me, so I have loved you. Abide in my love, even as I abide in my Father's love."-JOHN 15:9,16

CHRIST had taught His disciples that to abide in Him was to abide in His love. The hour of His suffering is nigh, and He cannot speak muchmore to them. They doubtless have many questions to ask as to what that abiding in Him and His love is. He anticipates and meets their wishes, and gives them His OWN LIFE as the best exposition of His command. As example and rule for their abiding in His love, they have to look to His abiding in the Father's love. In the light of His union with the Father, their union with Him will become clear. His life in the Father is the law of their life in Him.

The thought is so high that we can hardly take it in, and is yet so clearly revealed, that we dare not neglect it. Do we not read in John 6 (ver.57), "As I live by the Father, even so he that eateth me, he shall live by me"? And the Saviour prays so distinctly (John 17:22), "that they may be one even as we are one: I in them, and Thou in me." The blessed union of Christ with the Father and His life in Him is the only rule of our thoughts and expectations in regard to our living and abiding in Him.

Think first of the origin of that life of Christ in the Father. They were ONE-one in life and one in love.In this His abiding in the Father had its root. Though dwelling here on earth, He knew that He was one with the Father that the Father's life was in Him, and His love on Him. Without this, knowledge, abiding in the Father and His love would have been utterly impossible. And it is thus only that you can abide in Christ and His love. Know that you are one with Him-one in the unity of nature. By His birth He became man, and took your nature that He might be one with you. By your new, birth you become one with Him, and are made partaker of His divine nature. The link that binds you to Him is as real and close as bound Him to the Father -the link of a divine life. Your claim on Him is as sure and always availing as was His on the Father. Your union with Him is as close.

And as it is the union of a divine life, it is one of an infinite love. In His life of humiliation on earth He tasted the blessedness and strength of knowing Himself the object of an infinite love, and of dwelling in it al the day; from His own example He invites you to learn that herein lies the secret of rest and joy. You are on with Him: yield. yourself now to be loved by Him; le your eyes and heart open to the love that shines an presses in on you on every side. Abide in His love.

Think then too of the mode of that abiding in the Father and His love which is to be the law of your life "I kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love." His was a life of subjection and dependence and yet most blessed. To our proud self-seeking nature ,the thought of dependence and subjection suggests the idea of humiliation and servitude; in the life of love which the Son of God lived, and to which He invite us, they are the secret of blessedness. The Son is not afraid of losing aught by giving up all to the Father for He knows that the Father loves Him, and can have no interest apart from that of the beloved Son. He knows that as complete as is

the dependence on His part is the communication on the part of the Father of all He possesses. Hence when He had said, "The Son can do nothing of Himself, except He see the Father do it," He adds at once, "Whatsoever things the Father doeth, them also doeth the Son likewise: for the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth." The believer who studies this life of Christ as the pattern and the promise of what his may be, learns to understand how the "Without me ye can do nothing, " is but the forerunner of "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." We learn to glory in infirmities, to take pleasure in necessities and distresses for Christ's sake; for "when I am weak, then am I strong." He rises above the ordinary tone in which so many Christians speak of their weakness, while they are content to abide there, because he has learnt from Christ that in the life of divine love the emptying of self and the sacrifice of our will is the surest way to have all we can wish or will. Dependence, subjection, self-sacrifice, are for the Christian as for Christ the blessed path of life. Like as Christ lived through and in the Father, even so the believer lives through and in Christ.

Think of the glory of this life of Christ in the Father's love. Because He gave Himself wholly to the Father's will and glory, the Father crowned Him with glory and honour. He acknowledged Him as His only representative; He made Him partaker of His power and authority; He exalted Him to share His throne as God. And even so will it be with him who abides in Christ's love. If Christ finds us willing to trust ourselves and our interests to His love, if in that trust we give up all care for our own will and honour, if we make it our glory to exercise and confess absolute dependence onHim in all things, if we are content to have no life but in Him, He will do for us what the Father did for Him. He will lay of His glory on us: As the name of our Lord is Jesus is glorified in us, we are glorified in Him (2 Thess.i. i 2). He acknowledges us as His true and worthy representatives; He entrusts us with His power; He admits us to His counsels, as He allows our intercession to influence His rule of His Church and the world; He makes us the vehicles of His authority and His influence over men. His Spirit knows no other dwelling than such, and seeks no other instruments for His divine work. Blessed life of love for the soul that abides in Christ's love, even as He in the Father's!

Believer! abide in the love of Christ. Take and study His relation to the Father as pledge of what thine own can become. As blessed, as mighty, as glorious as was His life in the Father, can yours be in Him. Let this truth, accepted under the teaching of the Spirit in faith, remove every vestige of fear, as if abiding in Christ were a burden and a work. In the light of His life in the Father, let it henceforth be to you a blessed rest in the union with Him, an overflowing fountain of joy and strength. To abide in His love, His mighty, saving, keeping, satisfying love, even as He abode in the Father's love-surely the very greatness of our calling teaches us that it never can be a work we have to perform; it must be with us as with Him, the result of the spontaneous outflowing of a life from within, and the mighty inworking of the love from above. What we only need is this: to take time and study the divine image of this life of love set before us in Christ. We need to have our souls still unto God, gazing upon that life of Christ in the Father until the light from heaven falls on it, and we hear the living voice of our Beloved whispering gently to us personally the teaching He gave to the disciples. Soul, be still and listen; let every thought be hushed until the word has entered your heart too: "Child! I love thee, even as the Father loved me. Abide in my love, even as I abide in the Father's love. Thy life on earth in me is to be the perfect counterpart of mine in the Father."

And if the thought will sometimes come: Surely this is too high for us; can it be really true? only remember that the greatness of the privilege is justified by the greatness of the object He has in view. Christ was the revelation of the Father on earth. He could not be this if there were not the most perfect unity, the most complete communication of all the Father had to the Son. He could be it because the Father loved Him, and He abode in that love. Believers are the revelation of Christ on earth. They cannot be this unless there be perfect unity, so that the world can know that He loves them and has sent them. But they can be it if Christ loves them with the infinite love that gives itself and all it has, and if they abide in that love.

Lord, show us Thy love. Make us with all the saints to know the love that passeth knowledge. Lord, show us in Thine own blessed life what it is to abide in Thy love. And the sight shall so win us, that it will be impossible for us one single hour to seek any other life than the life of abiding in Thy love.

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 24

OBEYING HIS COMMANDMENTS

"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."-JOHN 15:10.

How clearly we are taught here the place which good works are to occupy in the life of the believer! Christ as the beloved Son was in the Father's love. He kept His commandments, and so He abode in the love. So the believer, without works, receives Christ and is in Him; he keeps the commandments, and so abides in the love. When the sinner, in coming to Christ, seeks to prepare himself by works, the voice of the Gospel sounds, "Not of works." When once in Christ, lest the flesh should abuse the word, "Not of works," the Gospel lifts its voice as loud: "Created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (see Eph.2:9,10). To the sinner out of Christ, works may be his greatest hindrance, keeping him from the union with the Saviour. To the believer in Christ, works are strength and blessing, for by them faith is made perfect (Jas.2:22), the union with Christ is cemented, and the soul established and more deeply rooted in the love of God. "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him." "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love."

The connection between this keeping the commandments and the abiding in Christ's love is easily understood. Our union with Jesus Christ is not a thing of the intellect or sentiment, but a real vital union in heart and life. The holy life of Jesus, with His feelings and. disposition, is breathed into us by the Holy Spirit. The believer's calling is to think and feel and will just what Jesus thought and felt and willed. He desires to be partaker not only of the grace but also of the holiness of His Lord; or rather, he sees that holiness is the chief beauty of grace. To live the life of Christ means to him to be delivered from the life of self; the will of Christ is to him the only path of liberty from the slavery of his own evil self-will.

To the ignorant or slothful believer there is a great difference between the promises and commands of Scripture. The former he counts his comfort and his food; but to him who is really seeking to abide in Christ's love, the commands become no less precious, As much as the promises they are the revelation of the divine love, guides into the deeper experience of the divine life, blessed helpers in the path to a closer union with the Lord. He sees how the harmony of our will with His will is one of the chief elements of our fellowship with Him. The will is the central faculty in the Divine as in the human being. The will of God is the power that rules the whole moral as well as the natural world. How could there be fellowship with Him without delight in His will? It is only as long as salvation is to the sinner nothing but a personal safety, that he can be careless or afraid of the doing of God's will. No sooner is it to him what Scripture and the Holy Spirit reveal it to be-the restoration to communion with God and conformity to Him-than he feels that there is no law more natural or more beautiful than this: Keeping Christ's commandments the way to abide in Christ's love. His inmost soul approves when he hears the beloved Lord make the larger measure of the Spirit, with the manifestation of the Father and the Son in the believer, entirely dependent upon the keeping of His commandments (John 14:15,16,21,23).

There is another thing that opens to him a deeper, insight and Secures a still more cordial acceptance of this truth.

It is this, that in no other way did Christ Himself abide in the Father's love. In the life which Christ led upon earth, obedience was a solemn reality. The dark and awful power that led man to revolt from his God, came upon Him too, to tempt Him. To Him as man its offers of self-gratification were not matters of indifference; to refuse them, He had to fast and pray. He suffered, being tempted. Ile. spoke very distinctly of not seeking to do His own will, as a surrender He had continually to make. He made the keeping of the Father's commandments the distinct object of His life, and so abode in His love. Does He not tell us, "I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak these things. And He that sent me is with me; He hath not left me alone; for I do always the things that are pleasing to Him." He thus opened to us the only path to the blessedness of a life on earth in the love of heaven; and when, as from our vine, His Spirit flows in the branches, this keeping the commands is one of the surest and highest elements of the life He inspires.

Believer! would you abide in Jesus, be very careful to keep His commandments. Keep them in the love of your heart. Be not content to have them in the Bible for reference, but have them transferred by careful study, by meditation and by prayer, by a loving acceptance, by the Spirit's teaching, to the fleshy tables of the heart. Be not content with the knowledge of some of the commands, those most commonly received among Christians, while others lie unknown and neglected. Surely, with your New Covenant privileges, you would not be behind the Old Testament saints who spoke so fervently: "I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right." Be assured that there is still much of your Lord's will that you do not yet understand. Make Paul's prayer for the Colossians yours for yourself and all believers, "that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding"; and that of wrestling Epaphras, "that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." Remember that this is one of the great elements of' spiritual growth--.a deeper insight into the will of God concerning you. Imagine not- that entire consecration is the end-it is only the beginning-of the truly holy life. See how Paul, after having (Rom. xii. r) taught believers to lay themselves upon the altar, whole andholy burnt-offerings to their God, at once proceeds (ver. 2) to tell there what the true altar-life is: being ever more and more "renewed in their mind to prove what is the good and perfect and acceptable will of God." The progressive renewal of the Holy Spirit leads to growing like-mindedness to Christ; then comes a delicate power of spiritual perception-a holy instinct-by which the: soul "quick of understanding (marg.--quick of scent) in the fear of the Lord," knows to recognise the meaning and the application of the Lord's commands to daily life in a way that remains hidden to the ordinary Christian. Keep them dwelling richly within you, hide them within your heart, and you shall taste the blessedness of the man whose "delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate dayand night." Love will assimilate into your inmost being the commands as lood from heaven. They will no longer come to you as a law standing outside and against you, but as the living power which has transformed your will into perfect harmony with all your Lord requires.

And keep them in the obedience of your life. It has been your solemn vowhas it not?-no longer to tolerate even a single sin: "I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep Thy righteous judgments." Labour earnestly in prayer to stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. Ask earnestly for the discovery of every secret sin-of anything that is not in perfect harmony with the will of God. Walk up to the light you have faithfully and tenderly, yielding yourself in an unreserved surrender to obey all that the Lord has spoken. When Israel took that vow (Exodus 19:8, 24:7), it was only to break it all too soon. The New Covenant gives the grace to make the vow and to keep it too (Jer.31). Be careful of disobedience even in little things. Disobedience dulls the conscience, darkens the soul, deadens our spiritual energies therefore keep the commandments of Christ with implicit obedience. Be a soldier that asks for nothing but the orders of the commander.

And if even for a moment the commandments appear grievous, just remember whose they are. They are the commandments of Him who loves you. They are all love, they come from His love, they lead to His love. Each new surrender to keep the commandments, each new sacrifice in keeping them, leads to deeper union with the

will, the spirit, and the love of the Saviour. The double recompense of reward shall be yours-a fuller entrance into the mystery of His love-a fuller conformity to His own blessed life. And you shall learn to prize these words as among your choicest treasures: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, EVEN as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love.

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 25

THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL

"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might abide in you, and that your joy might be full. --JOHN 15:11

ABIDING fully in Christ is a life of exquisite and overflowing happiness. As Christ gets more complete possession of the soul, it enters into the joy of its Lord. His own joy, the joy of heaven, becomes its own, and that in full measure, and as an ever-abiding portion. Just as joy on earth is everywhere connected with the vine and its fruit, so joy is an essential characteristic of the life of the believer who fully abides in Christ, the heavenly Vine.

We all know the value of joy. It alone is the proof that what we have really satisfies the heart. As long as duty, or self-interest, or other motives influence me, men cannot know what the object of my pursuit or possession is really worth to me. But when it gives me joy, and they see me delight in it, they know that to me at least it is a treasure. Hence there is nothing so attractive as joy, no preaching so persuasive as the sight of hearts made glad. Just this makes gladness such a mighty element in the Christian character: there is no proof of the reality of God's love and the blessing He bestows, which men so soon feel the force of, as when the joy of God overcomes all the trials of life. And for the Christian's own welfare, joy is no less indispensable: the joy of the Lord is his strength; confidence, and courage, and patience find their inspiration in joy. With a heart full of joy no work can weary, and no burden can depress; God Himself is strength and song.

Let us hear what the Saviour says of the joy of abiding in Him. He promises us His own joy: "My joy." As the whole parable refers to the life His disciples should have in Him when ascended to heaven, the joy is that of His resurrection life. This is clear from those other words of His (John 16:22): "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy shall no man take from you." It was only with the resurrection and its glory that the power of the never-changing life began, and only in it that the never-ceasing joy could have its rise. With it was fulfilled the word: "Therefore thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." The day of His crowning was the day of the gladness of His heart. That joy of His was the joy of a work fully and for ever completed, the joy of the Father's bosom regained, and the joy of souls redeemed. These are the elements of His joy; of them the abiding in Him makes us partakers. The believer shares so fully His victory and His perfect redemption, that his faith can without ceasing sing the conqueror's song: "Thanks be to God, who always causeth me to triumph." As the fruit of this, there is the joy of the undisturbed dwelling in the light of the Father's love-not a cloud to intervene if the abiding be unbroken. And then, with this joy in the love of the Father, as a love received, the joy of the love of souls, as love going out and rejoicing over the lost. Abiding in Christ, penetrating into the very depths of His life and heart, seeking for the most perfect oneness, these the three streams of His joy flow into our hearts. Whether we look backward and see the work He has done, or upward and see the reward He has in the Father's love that passeth knowledge, or forward in the continual accessions of joy as sinners are brought home, His joy is ours. With our feet on Calvary, our eyes on the Father's countenance, and our hands helping sinners home, we have His joy as our own.

And then He speaks of this joy as abiding-a joy that is never to cease or to be interrupted for a moment: "That my joy might abide in you." "Your joy no man taketh from you." This is what many Christians cannot understand. Their view of the Christian life is that it is a succession of changes, now joy and now sorrow. And they appeal to the experiences of a man like the Apostle Paul, as a proof of how much there may be of weeping, and sorrow, and suffering. They have not noticed how just Paul gives the strongest evidence as to this unceasing joy. He understood the paradox of the Christian life as the combination at one and the same moment of all the bitterness of earth and all the joy of heaven. "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing": these precious golden words teach us how the joy of Christ can overrule the sorrow of the world, can make us sing while we weep, and can maintain in the heart, even when cast down by disappointment or difficulties, a deep consciousness of a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. There is but one condition: "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy shall no man take from you." The presence of Jesus, distinctly manifested, cannot but give joy. Abiding in Him consciously, how can the soul but rejoice and be glad? Even when weeping for the sins and the souls of others, there is the fountain of gladness springing up in the faith of His power and love to save.

And this His own joy abiding with us, He wants to be full. Of the full joy our Saviour spoke thrice on the last night. Once here in the parable of the Vine: "These things have I spoken unto you that your joy might be full" ; and every deeper insight into the wonderful blessedness of being the branch of such a Vine confirms His Word. Then He connects it (John 16:24) with our prayers being answered: "Ask and ye shall receive,that your joy may be full." To the spiritual mind, answered prayer is not only a means of obtaining certain blessings, but something infinitely higher. It is a token of our fellowship with the Father and the Son in heaven, of their delight in us, and our having been admitted and having had a voice in that wondrous interchange of love in which the Father and the Son hold counsel, and decide the daily guidance of the children on earth. To a soul abiding in Christ, that longs for manifestations of His love, and that understands to take an answer to prayer in its true spiritual value, as a response from the throne to all its utterances of love and trust, the joy which it brings is truly unutterable. The word is found true: "Ask and ye shall receive, and your joy shall be full." And then the Saviour says, in His highpriestly prayer to the Father (John 17:13), "These things I speak, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." It is the sight of the great High Priest entering the Father's presence for us, ever living to pray and carry on His blessed work in the power of an endless life, that removes every possible cause of fear or doubt, and gives us the assurance and experience of a perfect salvation. Let the believer who seeks, according to the teaching of John 15, to possess the full joy of abiding in Christ, and according to John 16, the full joy of prevailing prayer, press forward to John 17. Let him there listen to those wondrous words of intercession spoken, that his joy might be full. Let him, as he listens to those words, learn the love that even now pleads for him in heaven without ceasing, the gloriousobjects for which it is pleading, and which through its all-prevailing pleading are hourly being realized, and Christ's joy will be fulfilled in him.

Christ's own joy, abiding joy, fulness of joy-such is the portion of the believer who abides in Christ. Why, O why is it that this joy has so little power to attract? The reason simply is: Men, yea, even God'schildren, do not believe in it. Instead of the abiding in Christ being looked upon as the happiest life that ever can be led, it is regarded as a life of self-denial and of sadness. They forget that the self-denial and the sadness are owing to the not abiding, and that to those who once yield themselves unreservedly to abide in Christ as a bright and blessed life, their faith comes true -the joy of the Lord is theirs. The difficulties all arise from the want of the full surrender to a full abiding.

Child of God, who seekest to abide in Christ, remember what the Lord says. At the close of the parable of the Vine He adds these precious words: "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might abide in you, and that your joy might be full." Claim the joy as part of the branch life-not the first or chief part, but as the blessed proof of the sufficiency of Christ to satisfy every need of the soul. Be happy. Cultivate gladness. If there are times

when it comes of itself, and the heart feels the unutterable joy of the Saviour's presence, praise God for it, and seek to maintain it. If at other times feelings are dull, and the experience of the joy not such as you could wish it, still praise God for the life of unutterable blessedness to which you have been redeemed. In this, too, the word holds good: "According to your faith be it unto you." As you claim all the other gifts in Jesus, ever claim this one too-not for your own sake, but for His and the Father's glory. "My joy in you"; "that my joy may abide in you"; "my joy fulfilled in themselves"-these are Jesus' own words. It is impossible to take Him wholly and heartily, and not to get His joy too. Therefore, "Rejoice ire she Lord always and again I say, Rejoice."

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 26

AND IN LOVE TO THE BRETHREN

"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. "-JOHN 15:12.

"Like as the Father loved me, EVEN so I have loved you; LIKE As I have loved you, EVEN so love ye one another." God became man; divine love began to run in the channel of a human heart; it becomes the love of man to man. The love that fills heaven and eternity is ever to be daily seen here in the life of earth and of time.

"This is my commandment," the Saviour says, "That ye love one another, as I have loved you." He sometimes spoke of commandments, but the love, which is the fulfilling of the law, is the all-including one, and therefore is called His commandment-the new commandment. It is to be the great evidence of the reality of the New Covenant, of the power of the new life revealed in Jesus Christ. It is to be the one convincing and indisputable token of discipleship: "Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples" ; "That they may be one in us, that the world may believe" ; "That they may be made perfect in one, that the world may know that Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me." To the believer seeking perfect fellowship with Christ, the keeping of this commandment is at once the blessed proof that he is abiding in Him, and the path to a fuller and more perfect union.

Let us try to understand how this is so. We know that God is love, and that Christ came to reveal this, not as a doctrine but as a life. His life, in its wonderful self-abasement and self-sacrifice, was, above everything, the embodiment of divine love, the showing forth to men, in such human manifestations as they could understand, how God loves. In His love to the unworthy and the ungrateful, in His humbling Himself to walk among men as a servant, in His giving Himself up to death, He simply lived and acted out the life of the divine love which was in the heart of God. He lived and died to show us the love of the Father.

And now, just as Christ was to show forth God's love, believers are to show forth to the world the love of Christ. They are to prove to men that Christ loves them, and in loving fills them with a love that is not of earth. They, by living and by loving just as He did, are to be perpetual witnesses to the love that gave itself to die. He loved so that even the Jews cried out, as at Bethany, "Behold how He loved!" Christians are to live so that men are compelled to say, "See how these Christians love one another." In their daily intercourse with each other, Christians are made a spectacle to God, and to angels, and to men; and in the Christlikeness of their love to each other, are to prove what manner of spirit they are of. Amid all diversity of character or of creed, of language or of station, they are to prove that love has made them members of one body, and of each other, and has taught them each to forget and sacrifice self for the sake of the other. Their life of love is the chief evidence of Christianity, the proof to the world that God sent Christ, and that He has shed abroad in them the same love with which He loved Him. Of all the evidences of Christianity, this is the mightiest and most convincing.

This love of Christ's disciples to each other occupies a central position between their love to God and to all men. Of their love to God, whom they cannot see, it is the test. The love to one unseen may so easily be amere sentiment, or even an imagination; in the intercourse with God's children, love to God is really called into

exercise, and shows itself in deeds that the Father accepts as done to Himself. So alone can it be proved to be true. The love to the brethren is the flower and fruit of the root, unseen in the heart, of love to God. And this fruit again becomes the seed of love to all men: intercourse with each other is the school in which believers are trained and strengthened to love their fellow-men, who are yet out of Christ, not simply with the liking that rests on points of agreement, but with the holy love that takes hold of the unworthiest, and bears with the most disagreeable for Jesus' sake. It is love to each other as disciples that is ever put in the foreground as the link between love to God alone and to men in general.

In Christ's intercourse with His disciples this brotherly love finds the law of its conduct. As it studies His forgiveness and forbearance towards His friends, with the seven times seven as its only measure-as it looks to His unwearied patience and His infinite humility-as it sees the meekness and lowliness with which He seeks to win for Himself a place as their servant, wholly devoted to their interests-it accepts with gladness His command, "Ye should do as I have done" (John xiii. 1 5). Following His example, each lives not for Himself but for the other. The law of kindness is on the tongue, for love has vowed that never shall one unkind word cross its lips. It refuses not only to speak, but even to hear or to think evil; of the name and character of the fellowChristian it is more jealous than of its own. My own good name I may leave to the Father; my brother's my Father has entrusted to me. In gentleness and loving kindness, in courtesy and generosity, in self-sacrifice and beneficence, in its life of blessing and of beauty, the divine love, which has been shed abroad in the believer's heart, shines out as it shone in the life of Jesus.

Christian! what say you of this your glorious calling to love like Christ? Does not your heart bound at the thought of the unspeakable privilege of thus showing forth the likeness of the Eternal Love? Or are you rather ready to sigh at the thought of the inaccessible height of perfection to which you are thus called to climb? Brother, sigh not at what is in very deed the highest token of the Father's love, that He has called us to be like Christ in our love, just as He was like the Father in His love. Understand that He who gave the command in such close connection with His teaching about the Vine and the abiding in Him, gave us in that the assurance that we have only to abide in Him to be able to love like Him. Accept the command as a new motive to a more full abiding in Christ. Regard the abiding in Him more than ever as an abiding in His love; rooted and grounded daily in a love that passeth knowledge, you receive of its fulness, and learn to love. With Christ abiding in you, the Holy Spirit sheds abroad the love of God in your heart, and you love the brethren, the most trying and unloveable, with a love that is not your own, but the love of Christ in you. And the command about your love to the brethren is changed from a burden into a joy, if you but keep it linked, as Jesus linked it, to the command about His love to you: "Abide in my love; love one another, as I have loved you."

"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." Is not this now some of the much fruit that Jesus has promised we shall bear-in very deed a cluster of the grapes of Eshcol, with which we can prove to others that the land of promise is indeed a good land? Let us try in all simplicity and honesty to go out to our home to translate the language of high faith and heavenly enthusiasm into the plain prose of daily conduct, so that all men can understand it. Let our temper be under the rule of the love of Jesus: He can not alone curb it-He can make us gentle and patient. Let the vow, that not an unkind word about others shall ever be heard from our lips, be laid trustingly at His feet. Let the gentleness that refuses to take offence, that is always ready to excuse, to think and hope the best, mark our intercourse with all. Let the love that seeks not its own, but ever is ready to wash others' feet, or even to give its life for them, be our aim as we abide in Jesus. Let our life be one of selfsacrifice, always studying the welfare of others, finding our highest joy in blessing others. And let us, in studying the divine art of doing good, yield ourselves as obedient learners to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. By His grace, the most commonplace life can be transfigured with the brightness of a heavenly beauty, as the infinite love of the divine nature shines out through our frail humanity. Fellow-Christian, let us praise God! We are called

to love as Jesus loves, as God loves.

"Abide in my love, and love as I have loved." Bless God, it is possible. The new holy nature we have, and which grows ever stronger as it abides in Christ the Vine, can love as He did. Every discovery of the evil of the old nature, every longing desire to obey the command of our Lord, every experience of the power and the blessedness of loving with Jesus' love, will urge us to accept with fresh faith the blessed injunctions:"Abide in me, and I in you"; "Abide in my love."

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 27

THAT YOU MAY NOT SIN

"In him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not." -1 JOHN 3:5,6.

"YE KNOW," the apostle had said, "that He was manifested to take away our sin," and had thus indicated salvation from sin as the great object for which the Son was made man. The connection shows clearly that the taking away has reference not only to the atonement and freedom from guilt, but to deliverance from the power of sin, so that the believer no longer does it. It is Christ's personal holiness that constitutes His power to effect this purpose. He admits sinners into life union with Himself; the result is, that their life becomes like His. "In Him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not." As long as he abides, and as far as he abides, the believer does not sin. Our holiness of life has its roots in the personal holiness of Jesus. "If the root be holy, so also are the branches."

The question at once arises: How is this consistent with what the Bible teaches of the abiding corruption of our human nature, or with what John himself tells of the utter falsehood of our profession, if we say that we have no sin, that we have not singled? (see I John 1:8,10). It is just this passage which, if we look carefully at it, will teach us to understand our text aright. Note the difference in the two statements (ver. 8), "If we say that we have no sin," and (ver.10), "If we say that we have not sinned." The two expressions cannot be equivalent; the second would then be an unmeaning repetition of the first. Having sin in verse 8 is not the same as doing sin in verse 10. Having sin is having a sinful nature. The holiest believer must each moment confess that he has sin within him-the flesh, namely, in which dwelleth no good thing. Sinning or doing sin is something very different: it is yielding to indwelling sinful nature, and falling into actual transgression. And so we have two admissions that every true believer must make. The one is that he has still sin within him (ver. 8); the second, that that sin has in former times broken out into sinful actions (ver.10). No believer can say either, "I have no sin in me," or "I have in time past never sinned." If we say we have no sin at present, or that we have not sinned in the past, we deceive ourselves. But no confession, though we have sin in the present, is demanded that we are doing sin in the present too; the confession of actual sinning refers to the past. It may, as appears from chapter 2:2, be in the present also, but is expected not to be. And so we see how the deepest confession of sin in the past (as Paul's of his having been a persecutor), and the deepest consciousness of having still a vile and corrupt nature in the present, may consist with humble but joyful praise to Him who keeps from stumbling.

But how is it possible that a believer, having sin in him-sin of such intense vitality, and such terrible power as we know the flesh to have-that a believer having sin should yet not be doing sin? The answer is: "In Him is no sin. He that abideth in Him sinneth not." When the abiding in Christ becomes close and unbroken, so that the soul lives from moment to moment in the perfect union with the Lord its keeper, He does, indeed, keep down the power of the old nature, so that it does not regain dominion over the soul. We have seen that there are degrees in the abiding. With most Christians the abiding is so feeble and intermittent, that sin continually obtains the ascendency, and brings the soul into subjection. The divine promise given to faith is: "Sin shall not have dominion over you." But with the promise is the command: "Let not sin reign in your mortal body." The believer

who claims the promise in full faith has the power to obey the command, and sin is kept from asserting its supremacy. Ignorance of the promise, or unbelief, or unwatchfulness, opens the door for sin to reign. And so the life of many believers is a course of continual stumbling and sinning. But when the believer seeks full admission into, and a permanent abode in Jesus, the Sinless One, then the life of Christ keeps from actual transgression. "In Him is no sin. He that abideth in Him sinneth not. " Jesus does indeed save him from his sin-not by the removal of his sinful nature, but by keeping him from yielding to it.

I have read of a young lion whom nothing could awe or keep down but the eye of his keeper. With the keeper you could come near him, and he would crouch, his savage nature all unchanged, and thirsting for blood -trembling at the keeper's feet. You might put your foot on his neck, as long as the keeper was with you. To approach him without the keeper would be instant death. And so it is that the believer can have sin and yet not do sin. The evil nature, the flesh, is unchanged in its enmity against God, but the abiding presence of Jesus keeps it down. In faith the believer entrusts himself to the keeping, to the indwelling, of the Son of God; he abides in Him, and counts on Jesus to abide in Him too. The union and fellowship is the secret of a holy life: "In Him is no sin; he that abideth in Him sinneth not."

And now another question will arise: Admitted that the complete abiding in the Sinless One will keep from sinning, is such abiding possible? May we hope to be able so to abide in Christ, say, even for one day, that we may be kept from actual transgressions? The question has only to be fairly stated and considered-- will suggest its own answer. When Christ commanded us to abide in Him, and promised us such rich fruit-bearing to the glory of the Father, and such mighty power in our intercessions, can He have meant anything but the healthy, vigorous, complete union of the branch with the vine? When He promised that as we abide in Him He would abide in us, could He mean anything but that His dwelling in us would be a reality of divine power and love? Is not this way of saving from sin just that which will glorify Him?keeping us daily humble and helpless in the consciousness of the evil nature, watchful and active in the knowledge of its terrible power, dependent and trustful in the remembrance that only His presence can keep the lion down. O let us believe that when Jesus said, "Abide in me, and I in you," He did indeed mean that, while we were not to be freed from the world and its tribulation, from the sinful nature and its temptations, we were at least to have this blessing fully secured to us-grace to abide wholly, only, even in our Lord. The abiding in Jesus makes it possible to keep from actual sinning; and Jesus Himself makes it possible to abide in Him.

Beloved Christian! I do not wonder if the promise of the text appears almost too high. Do not, I pray, let your attention be diverted by the question as to whether it would be possible to be kept for your whole life, or for so many years, without sinning. Faith has ever only to deal with the present moment. Ask this: Can Jesus at the present moment, as I abide in Him, keep me from those actual transgressions which have been the stain and the weariness of my daily life? You cannot but say: Surely He can. Take Him then at this present moment, and say, "Jesus keeps me now, Jesus saves me now." Yield yourself to Him in the earnest and believing prayer to be kept abiding, by His own abiding in you-and go into the next moment, and the succeeding hours, with this trust continually renewed. As often as the opportunity occurs in the moments between your occupations, renew your faith in an act of devotion: Jesus keeps me now, Jesus saves me now. Let failure and sin, instead of discouraging you, only urge you still more to seek your safety in abiding in the Sinless One. Abiding is a grace in which you can grow wonderfully, if you will but make at once the complete surrender, and then persevere with ever larger expectations. Regard it as His work to keep you abiding in Him, and His work to keep you from sinning. It is indeed your work to abide in Him; but it is that, only because it is His work as Vine to bear and hold the branch. Gaze upon His holy human nature as what He prepared ,for you to be partaker of with Himself, and you will see that there is something even higher and better than being kept from sin-that is but the restraining from evil: there is the positive and larger blessing of being now a vessel purified and cleansed, of being filled with His fulness,

and made the channel of showing forth His power, His blessing, and His glory.

NOTE

IS DAILY SINNING AN INEVITABLE NECESSITY?

"Why is it that, when we possess a Saviour whose love and lower are infinite, we are so often filled with fear and despondency? We are wearied and faint in our minds, because we do not look stedfastly unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who is set down at the right hand of God-unto Him whose omnipotence embraces both heaven and earth, who is strong and mighty in His feeble saints.

"While we remember our weakness, we forget His all-sufficient power. While we acknowledge that apart from Christ we can do nothing, we do not rise to the height or depth of Christian humility: I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. While we trust in the power of the death of Jesus to cancel the guilt of sin, we do not exercise a reliant and appropriating faith in the omnipotence of the living Saviour to deliver us from the bondage and power of sin in our daily life. We forget that Christ worketh in us mightily, and that, one with Him, we possess strength sufficient to overcome every temptation. We are apt either to forget our nothingness, and imagine that in our daily path we can live without sin, that the duties and trials of our everyday life can be performed and borne in our own strength; or we do not avail ourselves of the omnipotence of Jesus, who is able to subdue all things to Himself, and to keep us from the daily infirmities and falls which we are apt to imagine an inevitable necessity. If we really depended in all things and at all times on Christ, we would in all things and at all times gain the victory through Him whose power is infinite, and who is appointed by the Father to be the Captain of our salvation. Then all our deeds would be wrought, not merely before, but in God. We would then do all things to the glory of the Father, in the allpowerful name of Jesus, who is our sanctification. Remember that unto Him all power is given in heaven and on earth, and live by the constant exercise of faith in His power. Let us most fully believe that we have and are nothing, that with man it is impossible, that in ourselves we have no life which can bring forth fruit; but that Christ is all-that abiding in Him, and His word dwelling in us, we can bring forth . fruit to the glory of the Father"-From Christ and the Church. Sermons by Adolph Saphir. The italics are not in the original.

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 28

AS YOUR STRENGTH

"All power is given UNTO ME in heaven and in earth."-MATT.28:18

"Be strong IN THE LORD, and in the power of his might." --EPH.6.10.

"My power is made perfect in weakness."-2 COR.12:9 (R.V.).

THERE is no truth more generally admitted among earnest Christians than that of their utter weakness. There is no truth more generally misunderstood and abused. Here, as elsewhere, God's thoughts are heaven-high above man's thoughts.

The Christian often tries to forget his weakness: God wants us to remember it, to feel it deeply. The Christian wants to conquer his weakness and to be freed from it: God wants us to rest and even rejoice in it. The Christian mourns over his weakness: Christ teaches His servant to say, "I take pleasure in infirmities; most gladly will I glory in my infirmities." The Christian thinks his weakness his greatest hindrance in the life and service of God: God tells us that it is the secret of strength and success. It is our weakness, heartily accepted and continually realized, that gives us our claim and access to the strength of Him who has said, "My strength is made perfect in weakness."

When our Lord was about to take His seat upon the throne, one of His last words was: "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth." Just as His taking His place at the right hand of the power of God was something new and true-a real advance in the history of the God-man-so was this clothing with all power. Omnipotence was now entrusted to the man Christ Jesus, that from henceforth through the channels of human nature it might put forth its mighty energies. Hence He connected with this revelation of what He was to receive, the promise of the share that His disciples would have in it: When I am ascended, ye shall receive power from on high (Luke xxiv. 49; Acts i. 8). It is in the power of the omnipotent Saviour that the believer must find his strength for life and for work.

It was thus with the disciples. During ten days they worshipped and waited at the footstool of His throne. They gave expression to their faith in Him as their Saviour, to their adoration of Him as their Lord, to their love to Him as their Friend, to their devotion and readiness to work for Him as their Master. Jesus Christ was the one object of thought, of love, of delight. In such worship of faith and devotion their souls grew up into intensest communion with Him upon the throne, and when they were prepared, the baptism of power came. It was power within and power around.

The power came to qualify for the work to which they had yielded themselves-of testifying by life and word to their unseen Lord. With some the chief testimony was to be that of a holy life, revealing the heaven and the Christ from whom it came. The power came to set up the Kingdom within them, to give them the victory over sin and self, to fit them by living experience to testify to the power of Jesus on the throne, to make men live in the world

as saints. Others were to give themselves up entirely to the speaking in the naive of Jesus. But all needed and all received the gift of power, to prove that now Jesus had received the Kingdom of the Father, all power in heaven and earth was indeed given to Him, and by Him imparted to His people just as they needed it, whether for a holy life or effective service. They received the gift of power, to prove to the world that the Kingdom of God, to which they professed to belong, was not in word but in power. By having power within, they had power without and around. The power of God was felt even by those who would not yield themselves to it

(Acts 2.43; 4:13; 5:13).

And what Jesus was to these first disciples, He is to us too. Our whole life and calling as disciples find their origin and their guarantee in the words: "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth." What He does in and through us, He does with almighty power. What He claims or demands, He works Himself by that same power. All He gives, He gives with power. Every blessing He bestows, every promise He fulfils, every grace He works-all, all is to be with power. Everything that comes from this Jesus on the throne of power is to bear the stamp of power. The weakest believer may be confident that in asking to be kept from sin, to grow in holiness, to bring forth much fruit, be may count upon these his petitions being fulfilled with divine power. The power is in Jesus; Jesus is ours with all His fulness; it is in us His members that the power is to work and be made manifest.

And if we want to know how the power is bestowed, the answer is simple: Christ gives His power in us by giving His life in us. He does not, as so many believers imagine, take the feeble life He finds in them, and impart a little strength to aid them in their feeble efforts. No; it is in giving His own life in us that He gives us His power. The Holy Spirit came down to the disciples direct from the heart of their exalted Lord, bringing down into them the glorious life of heaven into which He had entered. And so His people are still taught to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. When He strengthens them, it is not by taking away the sense of feebleness, and giving in its place the feeling of strength. By no means. But in a very wonderful way leaving and even increasing the sense of utter impotence, He gives them along with it the consciousness of strength in Him. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us." The feebleness and the strength are side by side; as the one grows, the other too, until they understand the saying, "When I am weak, then am I strong; I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest on me."

The believing disciple learns to look upon Christ on the throne, Christ the Omnipotent, as his life. He studies that life in its infinite perfection and purity, in its strength and glory; it is the eternal life dwelling in a glorified man. And when he thinks of his own inner life, and longs for holiness, to live wellpleasing unto God, or for power to do the Father's work, he looks up, and, rejoicing that Christ is his life, he confidently reckons that that life will work mightily in him all he needs. In things little and things great, in the being kept from sin from moment to moment for which he has learned to look, or in the struggle with some special difficulty or temptation, the power of Christ is the measure of his expectation. He lives a most joyous and blessed life, not because he is no longer feeble, but because, being utterly helpless, he consents and expects to have the mighty Saviour work in him.

The lessons these thoughts teach us for practical life are simple, but very precious. The first is, that all our strength is in Christ, laid up and waiting for use. It is there as an almighty life, which is in Him for us, ready to flow in according to the measure in which it finds the channels open. But whether its flow is strong or feeble, whatever our experience of it be, there it is in Christ: All power in heaven and earth. Let us take time to study this. Let us get our minds filled with the thought: That Jesus might be to us a perfect Saviour, the Father gave Him all power. That is the qualification that fits Him for our needs: All the power of heaven over all the powers of earth, over every power of earth in our heart and life too.

The second lesson is: This power flows into us as we abide in close union with Him. When the union is feeble, little valued or cultivated, the inflow of strength will be feeble. When the union with Christ is rejoiced in as our highest good, and everything sacrificed for the sake of maintaining it, the power will work: "His strength will be made perfect in our weakness." Our one care must therefore be to abide in Christ as our strength. Our one duty is to be strong in the Lord,and in the power of His might. Let our faith cultivate large and clear apprehensions of the exceeding greatness of God's power in them that believe, even that power of the risen and exalted Christ by which He triumphed over every enemy (Eph. 1: 19-21). Let our faith consent to Gods wonderful and most blessed arrangement: nothing but feebleness in us as our own, all the power in Christ, and yet within our reach as surely as if it were in us. Let our faith daily go out of self and its life into the life of Christ, placing our whole being at His disposal for Him to work in us. Let our faith, above all, confidently rejoice in the assurance that He will in very deed, with His almighty power, perfect His work in us. As we thus abide in Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of His power, will work mightily in us, and we too shall sing, "JEHOVAH is my strength and song: IN JEHOVAH I have righteousness and strength." "1 can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me."

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 29

AND NOT IN SELF

"In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." -Rom. 7:18.

To have life in Himself is the prerogative of God alone, and of the Son, to whom the Father hath also given it. To seek life, not in itself, but in God, is the highest honour of the creature. To live in and to himself is the folly and guilt of sinful man; to live to God in Christ, the blessedness of the believer. To deny, to hate, to forsake, to lose his own life, such is the secret of the life of faith. "I live, yet NOT I, but Christ liveth in me"; "NOT I, but the grace of God which is with me": this is the testimony of each one who has found out what it is to give up his own life, and to receive instead the blessed life of Christ within us. There is no path to true life, to abiding in Christ, than that which our Lord went before us-through death.

At the first commencement of the Christian life, but few see this. In the joy of pardon, they feel constrained to live for Christ, and trust with the help of God to be enabled to do so. They are as yet ignorant of the terrible enmity of the flesh against God, and its absolute refusal in the believer to be subject to the law of God. They know not yet that nothing but death, the absolute surrender to death of all that is of nature, will suffice, if the life of God is to be manifested in them with power. But bitter experience of failure soon teaches them the insufficiency of what they have yet known of Christ's power to save, and deep bear t-longings are awakened to know Him better. He lovingly points them to His cross. He tells them that as there, in the faith of His death as their substitute, they found their title to life, so there they shall enter into its fuller experience too. He asks them if they are indeed willing to drink of the cup of which He drank-to be crucified and to die with Him. He teaches them that in Him they are indeed already crucified and deadall unknowing, at conversion they became partakers of His death. But what they need now is to give a full and intelligent consent to what they received ere they understood it, by an act of their own choice to will to die with Christ.

This demand of Christ's is one of unspeakable solemnity. Many a believer shrinks back from it. He can hardly understand it. He has become so accustomed to a low life of continual stumbling, that he hardly desires, and still less expects, deliverance. Holiness, perfect conformity to Jesus, unbroken fellowship with His love,can scarcely be counted distinct articles of his creed. Where there is not intense longing to be kept to the utmost from sinning, and to be brought into the closest possible union with the Saviour, the thought of being crucified with Him can find no entrance. The only impression it makes is that of suffering and shame: such a one is content that Jesus bore the cross, and so won for him the crown he hopes to wear. How different the light in which the believer who is really seeking to abide fully in Christ looks upon it. Bitter experience has taught him how, both in the matter of entire surrender and simple trust, his greatest enemy in the abiding life, is SELF. Now it refuses to give up its will; then again, by its working, it hinders God's work. Unless this life of self, with its willing and working, be displaced by the life of Christ, with His willing and working, to abide in Him will be impossible. And then comes the solemn question from Him who died on the cross: "Are you ready to give up self to the death?" You yourself, the living person born of God, are already in me dead to sin and alive to God; but are you ready now, in the power of this death, to mortify your members, to give up self entirely to its death of the cross, to be kept there until it be

wholly destroyed? The question is a heart-searching one. Ain I prepared to say that the old self shall no longer have a word to say; that it shall not be allowed to have a single thought, however natural-not a single feeling, however gratifying-not a single wish or work, however right?

Is this in very deed what He requires? Is not our nature God's handiwork, and may not our natural powers be sanctified to His service? They may and must indeed. But perhaps you have not yet seen how the only way they can be sanctified is that they be taken from under the power of self, and brought under the power of the life of Christ. Think not that this is a work that you can do, because you earnestly desire it, and are indeed one of His redeemed ones. No, there is no way to the altar of consecration but through death. As you yielded yourself a sacrifice on God's altar as one alive from the dead (Rom.6:13, 7:1), so each power of your nature-each talent, gift, possession, that is really to be holiness to the Lord-must be separated from the power of sin and self, and laid on the altar to be consumed by the fire that is ever burning there. It is in the mortifying, the slaying of self, that the wonderful powers with which God has fitted you to serve Him, can be set free for a complete surrender to God, and offered to Him to be accepted, and sanctified, and used. And though, as long as you are in the flesh, there is no thought of being able to say that self is dead, yet when the life of Christ is allowed to take full possession, self can be so kept in its crucifixion place, and under its sentence of death, that it shall have ho dominion over you, not for a single moment. Jesus Christ becomes your second self.

Believer! would you truly and fully abide in Christ, prepare yourself to part for ever from self, and not to allow it, even for a single moment, to have aught to say in your inner life. If you are willing to come entirely away out of self, and to allow Jesus Christ to become your life within you, inspiring all your thinking, feeling, acting, in things temporal and spiritual, He is ready to undertake the charge. In the fullest and widest sense the word life ever can have, He will be your life, extending His interest and influence to each one, even the minutest, of the thousand things that make up your daily life. To do this He asks but one thing: Come away out of self and its life, abide in Christ and the Christ life, and Christ will be your life. The power of His holy presence will cast out the old life.

To this end give up self at once and for ever. If you have never yet dared to do it, for fear you might fail of your engagement, do it now, in view of the promise Christ gives you that His life will take the place of the old life. Try and realize that though self is not dead, you are indeed dead to self. Self is still strong and living, but it has no power over you. You, your renewed nature-you, your new self, begotten again in Jesus death in Christ has freed you completely from the control of self: it has no power over you, except as you, in ignorance, or unwatchfulness, or unbelief, consent to yield to its usurped authority. Come and accept by faith simply and heartily the glorious position you have in Christ. As one who, in Christ, has a life dead to self, as one who is freed from the dominion of self, and has received His divine life to take the place of self, to be the animating and inspiring principle of your life, venture boldly to plant the foot upon the neck of this enemy of yours and your Lord's. Be of good courage, only believe; fear not to take the irrevocable step, and to say that you have once for all given up self to the death for which it has been crucified in Christ (Rom.6:6). And trust Jesus the Crucified One to hold self to the cross, and to fill its place in you with His own blessed resurrection life.

In this faith, abide in Christ! Cling to Him; rest on Him; hope on Him. Daily renew your consecration; daily accept afresh your position as ransomed from your tyrant, and now in turn made a conqueror. Daily look with holy fear on the enemy, self, struggling to get free from the cross, seeking to allure you into giving it some little liberty, or else ready to deceive you by its profession of willingness now to do service to Christ. Remember, self seeking to serve God is more dangerous than self refusing obedience. Look upon it with holy fear, and hide yourself in Christ: in Him alone is your safety. Abide thus in Him; He has promised to abide in you. He will teach you to be humble and watchful. He will teach you to be happy and trustful. Bring every interest of your life, every power of your nature, all the unceasing flow of thought, and will, and feeling, that makes up life, and trust Him to

take the place that self once filled so easily and so naturally. Jesus Christ will indeed take possession of you and dwell in you; and in the restfulness and peace and grace of the new life you shall have unceasing joy at the wondrous exchange that has been made-the corning out of self to abide in Christ alone.

NOTE

In his work on Sanctification, Marshall, in the twelfth chapter, on "Holiness through faith alone," puts with great force the danger in which the Christian is of seeking sanctification in the power of the flesh, with the help of Christ, instead of looking for it to Christ alone, and receiving it from Him by faith. He reminds us how there are two natures in the believer, and so two ways of seeking holiness, according as we allow the principles of the one or other nature to guide us. The one is the carnal way, in which we put forth our utmost efforts and resolutions, trusting Christ to help us in doing so. The other the spiritual way, in which, as those who have died, and can do nothing, our one care is to receive Christ day by day, and at every step to let Him live and work in us.

"Despair of purging the flesh or natural man of its sinful lusts and inclinations, and of practising holiness by your willing sand resolving to do the best that lieth in your own power, and trusting on the grace of God and Christ to help you in such resolutions and endeavours. Rather resolve to trust on Christ to work in you to will and to do by His own power according to His own good pleasure. They that are convinced of their own sin and misery do commonly first think to tame the flesh, and to subdue and root out its lusts, and to make their corrupt nature to be better-natured and inclined to holiness by theirstruggling and wrestling with it; and if they can but bring their hearts to a full purpose and resolution to do the best that lieth in them, they hope that by such a resolution they shall be able to achieve great enterprises in the conquests of their lusts and performance of the most difficult duties. It is the great work of some zealous divines in their preachings and writings to stir up people to this resolution, wherein they place the chiefest turningpoint from sin to godliness. And they think that this is not contrary to the life of faith, because they trust in the grace of God through Christ to help them in all such resolutions and endeavours. Thus they endeavour to reform their old state, and to be made perfect in the flesh, instead of putting it off and walking according to the new state in Christ. They trust on low carnal thins for holiness, and upon the acts of their own will, their purposes, resolutions, and endeavours, instead of Christ; and they trust to Christ to help them in this carnal way; whereas true faith would teach them that they are nothing, and that they do but labour in vain."

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 30

AS THE SURETY OF THE COVENANT

"Jesus was made a surety of a better testament. "-Heb 7:22

0F THE old Covenant, Scripture speaks as not being faultless, and God complains that Israel had not continued in it; and so He regarded them not (Heb.8:7-9). It had not secured its apparent object, in uniting Israel and God: Israel had forsaken Him, and He had not regarded Israel. Therefore God promises to make a New Covenant, free from the faults of the first, and effectual to realize its purpose. If it were to accomplish its end, it would need to secure God's faithfulness to His people, and His people's faithfulness to God. And the terms of the New Covenant expressly declare that these two objects shall be attained. "I will put my laws into their mind": thus God proposes to secure their unchanging faithfulness to Him. "Their sins I will remember no more" (see Heb.8:10-12): thus He assures His unchanging faithfulness to them. A pardoning God and an obedient people: these are the two parties who are to meet and to be eternally united in the New Covenant.

The most beautiful provision of this New Covenant is that of the surety in whom its fulfilment on both parts is guaranteed. Jesus was made the surety of the better covenant. To man He became surety that God would faithfully fulfil His part, so that man could confidently depend upon God to pardon, and accept, and never more forsake. And to God He likewise became surety that man would faithfully fulfil his part, so that God could bestow on him the blessing of the covenant. And the way in which He fulfils His suretyship is this: As one with God, and having the fulness of God dwelling in His human nature, He is personally security to men that God will do what He has engaged. All that God has is secured to us in Him as man. And then, as one with us, and having taken us up as members into His own body, He is security to God that His interests shall be cared for. All that man must be and do is secured in Him. It is the glory of the New Covenant that it has in the Person of the God-man its living surety, its everlasting security. And it can easily be understood how, in proportion as we abide in Him as the surety of the covenant, its objects and its blessings will be realized in us.

We shall understand this best if we consider it in the light of one of the promises of the New Covenant. Take that in Jer.32:40 : "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that 1 will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."

With what wonderful condescension the infinite God here bows Himself to our weakness! He is the Faithful and Unchanging One, whose word is truth; and yet more abundantly to show to the heirs of the promise the immutability of His counsel, He binds Himself in the covenant that He will never change: "I will make an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from them." Blessed the man who has thoroughly appropriated this, and finds his rest in the everlasting covenant of the Faithful One!

But in a covenant there are two parties. And what if man becomes unfaithful and breaks the covenant? Provision must be made, if the covenant is to be well ordered in all things and sure, that this cannot be, and that man too remain faithful. Man never can undertake to give such an assurance. And see, here God comes to provide for this

too. He not only undertakes in the covenant that He will never turn from His people, but also to put His fear in their heart, that they do not depart from Him. In addition to His own obligations as one of the covenanting parties, He undertakes for the other party too: "I WILL CAUSE you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them" (Ezek.36:27).Blessed the man who understands this half of the covenant too! He sees that his security is not in the covenant which he makes with His God, and which he would but continually break again. He finds that a covenant has been made, in which God stands good, not only for Himself, but for man too. He grasps the blessed truth that his part in the covenant is to accept what God has promised to do, and to expect the sure fulfilment of the divine engagement to secure the faithfulness of His people to their God: "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart, from me."

It is just here that the blessed work comes in of the surety of the covenant, appointed of the Father to see to its maintenance and perfect fulfilment. To Him the Father hath said, "I have given thee for a covenant of the people." And the Holy Spirit testifies, "All the promises of God IN Hint are yea, and in Him are Amen, to the glory of God by us." The believer who abides in Him hath a divine assurance for the fulfilment of every promise the covenant ever gave.

Christ was made surety of a better testament. It is as our Melchisedec that Christ is surety (see Heb.7). Aaron and his sons passed away; of Christ it is witnessed that He liveth. He is priest in the power of an endless life. Because He continueth ever, He hath an unchangeable priesthood. And because He ever liveth to make intercession, He can save to the uttermost, He can save completely. It is because Christ is the Ever-living One that His suretyship of the covenant is so effectual. He liveth ever to make intercession, and can therefore save completely. Every moment there rise up from His holy presence to the Father, the unceasing pleadings which secure to His people the powers and the blessings of the heavenly life. And every moment there go out from Him downward to His people, the mighty influences of His unceasing intercession, conveying to them uninterruptedly the power of the heavenly life. As surety with us for the Father's favour, He never ceases to pray and present us before Him; as surety with the Father for us, He never ceases to work, and reveal the Father within us.

The mystery of the Melchisedec priesthood, which the Hebrews were not able to receive (Heb.5:10-14), is the mystery of the resurrection life. It is in this that the glory of Christ as surety of the covenant consists: He ever liveth. He performs His work in heaven in the power of a divine, an omnipotent life. He ever liveth to pray; not a moment that as surety His prayers do not rise Godward to secure the Father's fulfilment to us of the covenant. He performs His work on earth in the power of that same life; not a moment that His answered prayers-the powers of the heavenly world-do not flow downward to secure for His Father our fulfilment of the covenant. In the eternal life there are no breaksnever a moment's interruption; each moment has the power of eternity in it. He ever, every moment, liveth to pray. He ever, every moment, liveth to bless. He can save to the uttermost, completely and perfectly, because He ever liveth to pray.

Believer! come and see here how the possibility of abiding in Jesus every moment is secured by the very nature of this everliving priesthood of your surety. Moment by moment, as His intercession rises up, its efficacy descends. And because Jesus stands good for the fulfilment of the covenant-"I will put my fear in their heart, and they shall not depart from me"-He cannot afford to leave you one single moment to yourself. He dare not do so, or He fails of His undertaking. Your unbelief may fail of realizing the blessing; He cannot be unfaithful. If you will but consider Him, and the power of that endless life after which He was made and is a High Priest, your faith will rise to believe that an endless, ever-continuing, unchangeable life of abiding in Jesus, is nothing less than what is waiting you.

It is as we see what Jesus is, and is to us, that the abiding in Him will become the natural and spontaneous result

of our knowledge of Him. If His life unceasingly, moment by moment, rises to the Father for us, and descends to us from the Father, then to abide moment by moment is easy and simple. Each moment of conscious intercourse with Him we simply say, "Jesus, surety, keeper, ever-living Saviour, in whose life I dwell, I abide in Thee. " Each moment of need, or darkness, or fear, we still say, "O thou great High Priest, in the power of an endless, unchangeable life, I abide in Thee. " And for the moments when direct and distinct communion with Him must give place to needful occupations, we can trust His suretyship, His unceasing priesthood, in its divine efficacy, and the power with which He saves to the uttermost, still to keep us abiding in Him.

Abide in Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 31

THE GLORIFIED ONE

"Your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."-COL.3:3-4

HE THAT abides in Christ the Crucified One, learns to know what it is to be crucified with Him, and in Him to be indeed dead unto sin. He that abides in Christ the Risen and Glorified One, becomes in the same way partaker of His resurrection life, and of the glory with which He has now been crowned in heaven. Unspeakable are the blessings which flow to the soul from the union with Jesus in His glorified life.

This life is a life of perfect victory and rest. Before His death, the Son of God had to suffer and to struggle, could be tempted and troubled by sin and its assaults as the Risen One, He has triumphed over sin; and, as the Glorified One, His humanity has entered into participation of the glory of Deity. The believer who abides in Him as such, as led to see how the power of sin and the flesh are indeed destroyed: the consciousness of complete and everlasting deliverance becomes increasingly clear, and the blessed rest and peace, the fruit of such a conviction that victory and deliverance are an accomplished fact, take possession of the life. Abiding in Jesus, in whom he has been raised and set in the heavenly places, be receives of that glorious life streaming from the Head through every member of the body.

This life is a life in the full fellowship of the Father's love and holiness. Jesus often gave prominence to this thought with His disciples. His death was a going to the Father. He prayed: "Glorify me, O Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had with Thee." As the believer, abiding in Christ the Glorified One, seeks to realize and experience what His union with Jesus on the throne implies, he apprehends how the unclouded light of the Father's presence is His highest glory and blessedness, and in Him the believer's portion too. He learns the sacred art of always, in fellowship with His exalted Head, dwelling in the secret of the Father's presence. Further, when Jesus was on earth, temptation could still reach Him: in glory, everything is holy, and in perfect harmony with the will of God. And so the believer who abides in Him experiences that in this high fellowship his spirit is sanctified into growing harmony with the Father's will. The heavenly life of Jesus is the power that casts out sin.

This life is a life of loving beneficence and activity. Seated on His throne, He dispenses His gifts, bestows His Spirit, and never ceases in love to watch and to work for those who are His. The believer cannot abide in Jesus the Glorified One, without feeling himself stirred and strengthened to work: the Spirit and the love of Jesus breathe the will and the power to be a blessing to others. Jesus went to heaven with the very object of obtaining power there to bless abundantly. He does this as the heavenly Vine only through the medium of His people as His branches. Whoever, therefore, abides in Him, the Glorified One, bears much fruit, for he receives of the Spirit and the power of the eternal life of his exalted Lord, and becomes the channel through which the fulness of Jesus, who hath been exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, flows out to bless those around him.

There is one more thought in regard to this life of the Glorified One, and ours in Him. It is a life of' wondrous

expectation and hope. It is so with Christ. He sits at the right hand of God, expecting till all His enemies be made His footstool, looking forward to the time when He shall receive His full reward, when His glory shall be made manifest, and His beloved people be ever with Him in that glory. The hope of Christ is the hope of His redeemed: "I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am there ye may be also." This promise is as precious to Christ as it ever can be to us. The joy of meeting is surely no less for the coming bridegroom than for the waiting bride. The life of Christ in glory is one of longing expectation: the full glory only comes when His beloved are with Him.

The believer who abides closely in Christ will share with Him in this spirit of expectation. Not so much for the increase of personal happiness, but from the spirit of enthusiastic allegiance to his King, he longs to see Him come in His glory, reigning over every enemy, the fill revelation of God's everlasting love. "Till He come, " is the watchword of every true-hearted believer. "Christ shall appear, and we shall appear with Him in glory."

There may be very serious differences in the exposition of the promises of His coming. To one it is plain as day that He is coming very speedily in person to reign on earth, and that speedy coming is his hope and his stay. To another, loving his Bible and his Saviour not less, the coming can mean nothing but the judgment day-the solemn transition from time to eternity, the close of history on earth, the beginning of heaven; and the thought of that manifestation of his Saviour's glory is no less his joy and his strength. It is Jesus, Jesus coming again, Jesus taking us to Himself, Jesus adored as Lord of all, that is to the whole Church the sum and the centre of its hope.

It is by abiding in Christ the Glorified One that the believer will be quickened to that truly spiritual looking for His coming, which alone brings true blessing to the soul. There is an interest in the study of the things which are to be, in which the discipleship of a school is often more marked than the discipleship of Christ the meek; in which contendings for opinions and condemnation of brethren are more striking than any signs of the coming glory. It is only the humility that is willing to learn from those who may have other gifts and deeper revelations of the truth than we, and the love that always speaks gently and tenderly of those who see not as we do, and the heavenliness that shows that the Coming One is indeed already our life, that will persuade either the Church or the world that this our faith is not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. To testify of the Saviour as the Coming One, we must be abiding in and bearing the image of Him as the Glorified One. Not the correctness of the views we hold, nor the earnestness with which we advocate them, will prepare us for meeting Him, but only the abiding in Him. Then only can our being manifested in glory with Him be what it is meant to be-a transfiguration, a breaking out and shining forth of the indwelling glory that had been waiting for the day of revelation.

Blessed life! "the life hid with Christ in God," "set in the heavenlies in Christ," abiding in Christ the glorified! Once again the question comes: Can a feeble child of dust really dwell in fellowship with the King of glory? And again the blessed answer has to be given: To maintain that union is the very work for which Christ has all power in heaven and earth at His disposal. The blessing will be given to him who will trust his Lord for it, who in faith and confident expectation ceases not to yield himself to be wholly one with Him. It was an act of wondrous though simple faith, in which the soul yielded itself at first to the Saviour. That faith grows up to clearer insight and faster hold of God's truth that we are one with Him in His glory. In that same wondrous faith, wondrously simple, but wondrously mighty, the soul learns to abandon itself entirely to the keeping of Christ's almighty power, and the actings of His eternal life. Because it knows that it has the Spirit of God dwelling within to communicate all that Christ is, it no longer looks upon it as a burden or a work, but allows the divine life to have its way, to do its work; its faith is the increasing abandonment of self, the expectation and acceptance of all that the love and the power of the Glorified One can perform. In that faith unbroken fellowship is maintained, and growing conformity realized. As with Moses, the fellowship makes partakers of the glory, and the life begins to

shine with a brightness not of this world.

Blessed life! it is ours, for Jesus is ours. Blessed life! we have the possession within us in its hidden power, and we have the prospect before us in its fullest glory. May our daily lives be the bright and blessed proof that the hidden power dwells within, preparing us for the glory to be revealed. May our abiding in Christ the Glorified One be our power to live to the glory of the Father, our fitness to share to the glory of the Son.

AND NOW,

LITTLE CHILDREN,

ABIDE IN HIM,

THAT, WHEN HE SHALL APPEAR, WE MAY HAVE

CONFIDENCE, AND NOT BE ASHAMED

BEFORE HIM AT HIS COMING.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

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by Andrew Murray

Translator's Note

A glance at the pages of this little work will show that it is more elementary than the other writings of its honoured author. The reason is that is specially designed for young disciples who have but recently chosen the better part, and consequently need nothing so much as just to sit at the feet of Jesus and hear His word. Every minister of a congregation in which young people have been brought to the Lord, will remember the keen feeling of anxiety that swept over his heart as he contemplated their entrance on the duties and responsibilities of a public Christian confession. The supreme question at such a time is: How shall these young converts be built up in the knowledge of the truth? How shall they be best taught the real nature of the new life they have received, the dangers by which it is beset, and the directions in which its energy may safely go forth?

The desire to give a fitting answer to these questions has given rise to many excellent manuals. In connection with every time of revival, especially, new books for this circle of readers always make their appearance. As Mr. Murray indicates in the Preface, it was in the midst of such a happy period that the following chapters were written. The volume came under my notice whilst I was recently traveling in Holland. A brief inspection showed me that it was one of the most simple, comprehensive, and suggestive of its class. It is now translated into English from the latest Dutch edition, that the many thousands who have profited by Mr. Murray's other admirable works may have a suitable book to give or recommend to those who are setting their faces towards an earnest and fruitful Christian life.

That it will be very helpful to this end I cannot doubt: especially if the directions the author himself has given are faithfully adhered to. It will be noticed that the chapters are comparatively short; but every one of them has a considerable number of Biblical references. Let no reader be content to read what is written here without turning up and examining the texts marked This practice, if persistently carried out, cannot fail to yield much recompense. There are just as many chapters in the book as Sabbaths in the year. What an additional blessing it would bring, if the members of a family who have had access to the book during the week, were to hear a chapter read aloud every Sabbath evening, and were encouraged to quote the texts in each that my have struck them most.

I have only to add that the volume is now translated and issued with Mr. Murray's cordial sanction. It has been to me a very pleasant task to put t into an English dress for my younger brethren throughout the country. Beyond this point, of course, my responsibility does not go. Should the book prove useful in guiding the feet of those who have come to the Lord yet further into the way of peace and holiness, it will be, both for author and translator, the answer to many a fervent prayer.

J.P.L.

Abbroath, September 1891

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

Preface

In intercourse with young converts, I have very frequently longed for a suitable book in which the most important truths that they have need of for the New Life should be briefly and simply set forth. I could not find anything that entirely corresponded to what I desired. During the services in which, since Whitsuntide 1884, I have been permitted to take part, and in which I have been enabled to speak with so many who professed to have found the Lord, and who were, nevertheless, still very weak in knowledge and faith, this want was felt by me still more keenly. In the course of my journey, I felt myself pressed to take the pen in hand. Under a vivid impression of the infirmities and the perverted thoughts concerning the New Life, with which, as was manifest to me from conversations I had with them, almost all young Christians have to wrestle, I wished, in some words of instruction and encouragement, to let them see what a glorious life of power and joy is prepared for them in their Lord Jesus, and how simple the way is to enjoy all this blessing.

I have confined myself in these reflections to some of the most important topics. The first is *the Word of God* as the glorious and sure guide, even for the simplest souls that will only surrender themselves to it. Then, as the chief element in the word, there is *the Son, the gift of the Father,* to do all for us. Thereupon follows what the Scriptures teach concerning *Sin*, as the only thing that we have to bring to Jesus, as that which we must give to Him, and from which He will set us free. Further, there is *Faith*, the great word in which is expressed our inability to bring or to do anything, and that teaches us that all our salvation must be received every day of our life as a gift from above. With the *Holy Spirit* also must the young Christian make acquaintance, as the Person through whom the word and Jesus, with all His work, and faith in Him, can become power and truth. Then there is *the Holy Life* of obedience and of fruitfulness, in which the Spirit teaches us to walk. It is to these six leading thoughts of the New Life that I have confined myself, with the ceaseless prayer that God may use what I have written to make His young children understand what a glorious and mighty life it is that they have received from their Father. It was often very unwillingly that I took leave of the young converts who had to go back to lonely places, where they could have little counsel or help, and seldom mingle in the preaching of the word. It is my sure and confident expectation that what the Lord has given me to write shall prove a blessing to many of these young confessors.

[I have, in some instances, attached the names of the places where the different portions of this manual were written; in others, the names of the towns where the substance of them was spoken, as a remembrance to the friends with whom I had intercourse.]

While writing this book I have had a second wish abiding with me. I have thought what I could possibly do to secure that my little book should not draw away attention from the word of God, but rather help to make the word more precious. I resolved to furnish the work with marginal references, so that, on every point that was treated of, the reader might be stirred up still to listen *to the Word itself,* to GOD HIMSELF.

I am hopeful that this arrangement will yield a double benefit. Many a one does not know, and had nobody to teach him, how to examine the Scriptures properly. This book may help him in his loneliness. If he will only meditate on one and another point, and then look up the texts that are quoted, he will get into the way of consulting God's word itself on that which he wishes to understand. But it may just as readily be of service in prayer meetings or social gatherings for the study of the word. Let each one read the portion fixed on at home and review those texts that seem to him the most important. Let the president of the meeting read the portion aloud once. Let him then request that each one who pleases should announce one and another text on that point which has struck him most.

We have found in my congregation that the benefit of such meetings for bringing and reading aloud texts on a point previously announced, is very great. This practice leads to the searching of God's word, as even preaching does not. It stirs up the members of the congregation, especially the young people, to independent dealing with the word. It leads to a more living *fellowship* amongst the members of Christ's body, and helps also their upbuilding in love. It prepares the way for a social recognition of the word as the living communication of the thoughts of God, which with Divine power shall work in us what is pleasing to God. I am persuaded that there is many a believing man and woman that asks what they can accomplish for the Lord, who along this pathway could become the channels of great blessing. Let them once a week bring together some of their neighbours or friends (sometimes two or three household live on one farm) to hear read out texts for which all have been previously searching: the Lord shall certainly give His blessing there.

With respect to the use of this book in retirement, I would fain request one thing more. I hope that no one will think it strange. Let every portion be read over at least three times. The great bane of all our converse with Divine things is superficiality. When we read anything and understand it somewhat, we think that this is enough. No: we must give *time,* that it may make an impression and wield its own influence upon us. Read every portion *the first time* with consideration, to understand the good that is in it, and then see if you receive benefit from the thoughts that are there expressed. Read it *the second time* to see if it is really in accordance with God's word: take some, if not all, of the texts that are adduced on each point, and ponder them in order to come under the full force of what God has said on the point. Let your God, through His word, teach you what you must think and believe concerning Him and His will. Read it then *the third time* to find out the corresponding places, not in the Bible, but in your own life, in order to know if your life has been in harmony with the New Life, and to direct your life for the future entirely according to God's word. I am fully persuaded that the time and pains spent on such converse with the word of God under the teaching of this or some book that helps you in dealing with it, will be rewarded tenfold.

I conclude with a cordial brotherly greeting to all with whom I have been permitted to mingle during the past year, in speaking about the precious Saviour and His glorious salvation: also to all in other congregations, who in this last season have learned to know the beloved Lord Jesus as their Redeemer. With a heart full of peace and love, I think of you all, and I pray that the Lord may confirm His work in you. I have not become weary of crying to you: the blessedness and the power of the New Life that is in you are greater than you know, are wonderfully great: only learn to know aright and trust in Jesus, *the gift of God* and the Scriptures, *the word of God.* Only give Him time to hold converse with you and to work in you, and your heart shall overflow with the blessedness of God.

Now to Him who is able to do more than exceedingly above all that we can ask or think, to Him be glory in the Church to all eternity.

ANDREW MURRAY.

Wellington, 12th August 1885

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

I. THE NEW LIFE

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." -- John 3:16
"For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Christ is our life." -- Col. 3:3,4
"We declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. God gave unto us eternal life; and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life." - 1 John 1:2,11,12

How glorious, then, is the blessing which every one receives that believes in the Lord Jesus. Not only does there come a change in his disposition and manner of life; he also receives from God out of heaven an entirely new life. He is born anew, born of God: he has passed from death into life. (John 1:12-13; 3:5,7; 5:24; 1 John 3:14; 5:1)

This new life is nothing less than Eternal Life. (John 3:15-16,36; 6:40,51; 6:25-26; Romans 6:11,23; 8:2; 1 John 5:12,13) This does not mean, as many suppose, that our life shall now no more die, but shall endure into eternity. No: eternity life is nothing else than the very life of God, the life that He has had in Himself from eternity, and that has been visibly revealed in Christ. This life is now the portion of every child of God. (1 John 1:3; 3:1, 5:11)

This life is a life of inconceivable power. Whenever God gives life to a young plant or animal, that life has in itself the power of growth, whereby the plant or animal as of itself becomes large. Life is power. In the new life, that is, in your heart, there is the power of eternity. (John 5:10,28; Heb. 7:16,29; 6:25,26; 2 Cor 7:9; 8:4; Col. 3:3-4; Phil. 4:13) More certain than the healthful growth of any tree or animal is the growth and increase of the child of God, who in reality surrenders himself to the working of the new life.

What hinders this power and the reception of the new spiritual life is chiefly two things. The one is ignorance of its nature, its laws and workings. Man, even the Christian, has of himself not the least conception of the new life that comes from God: it surpasses all his thoughts. His own perverted thoughts of the way to serve and to please God, namely, by what he does and is, are so deeply rooted in him, that, although he thinks that he understands and receives God's word, he yet thinks humanly and carnally on Divine things. (Jos. 3:4; Isa. 4:8,9; Matt. 16:23) Not only must God give salvation and life; He must also give the Spirit to make us know what He gives. Not only must He point out the land of Canaan, and the way thither; we must also, like the blind, be led every day by Himself. The young Christian must try to cherish a deep conviction of his ignorance concerning the new life, and of his inability to form right thoughts about it. This will bring him to the meekness and to the childlike spirit of docility, to which the Lord shall make His secret known. (Ps. 25:5,8-9; 143:8; Isa. 42:16; 64:4; Matt. 11:25; 1 Cor. 1:18-19; 2:7,10,12; Heb. 11:8)

There is a second hindrance in the way of faith. In the life of every plant and every animal and every child there lies sufficient power by which it can become big. In the new life, God has made the most glorious provision of a sufficient power whereby His child can grow and become all that he must be. Christ Himself is his life and his power of life. (Ps. 18:2; 27:1; 38:3; 34:8; John 14:19; Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:3,4) Yet, because this mighty life is not visible or cannot be felt, but works in the midst of human weakness, the young Christian often becomes of doubtful mind. He then fails to believe that he shall grow with Divine power and certainty. He does not understand that the believing life is a life of faith whereby he reckons on the life that is in Christ for him, although he neither sees, feels, nor experiences anything. (Hab. 2:4; Matt. 6:27; Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38)

Let every one then that has received this new life, cultivate this great conviction: it is eternal life that works in me: it works with Divine power: I can and shall become what God will have me be: Christ Himself is my life: I have to receive Him every day as my life given by God to me, and He shall be my life in full power.

> O my Father, who hast given me Thy Son that I may have life in Him, I thank Thee for the glorious new life that is now in me. I pray Thee, teach me to know aright this new life. I will acknowledge my ignorance and the perverted thoughts which are in me, concerning Thy service. I will believe in the heavenly power of the new life that is in me: I will believe that my Lord Jesus, who Himself is my life, will by His Spirit teach me to know how I can walk in that life. Amen.

Try now to apprehend and appropriate the following lessons in your heart; --

1. It is eternal life, the very life of God, that you have now received through faith.
2. This new life is in Christ, and the Holy Spirit is in you to bring over to you all that is in Christ. Christ lives in you through the Holy Spirit.
3. This life is a life of wonderful power. However weak you may feel, you must believe in the Divine power of the life that is in you.
4. This life has need of time to grow in you and to take possession of you. Give it time: it shall surely increase.
5. Forget not that all the laws and rules of this new life are in conflict with all human thoughts of the way to please God. Be very much in dread of your thoughts, and let Christ, who is your life and also your wisdom, teach you all things.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

II. THE MILK OF THE WORD

"As new-born babes, long for the spiritual milk that is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation" -- 1 Peter 2:2

Beloved young Christians, hear what your Father has to say in this word. You have just recently given yourselves to the Lord, and have believed that He has received you. You have thus received the new life from God. you are now as new-born infants: He would teach you in this word what is necessary that you may grow and wax strong.

The first point is: *you must know that you are God's children.* Hear how distinctly Peter says this to those just converted: (1 Pet. 1:23; 2:2,10,25) `You have been born again,' `you are new-born infants,' `you are now converted,' `you are now the people of God.' A Christian, however young and weak he is, must know that he is God's child. Then only can he have the courage to believe that he shall make progress, and the boldness to use the food of the children provided in the word. All Scripture teaches us that we must know and can know that we are children of God. (Rom 8:16; 1 Cor. 3:1,16; Gal. 4:6,7; 1 John 3:2,14,24; 4:13, 5:10,13) The assurance of faith is indispensable to a healthy powerful growth in the Lord. (Eph. 5:8; Col. 2:6; 1 Pet. 1:14,19)

The second point which this word teaches you is: *you are still very weak*, weak as new-bon children. The joy and the love which a young convert sometimes experiences do indeed make him think that he is very strong. He runs the risk of exalting himself, and of trusting in what he experiences. He must nevertheless learn much of how he must become strong in his Lord Jesus. Endeavour to feel deeply that you are still young and weak. (1 Cor. 3:1,13; Heb. 5:13,14) Out of this sense of weakness comes the humility which has nothing (Matt. 5:3; Rom 12:3,10; Eph. 4:2; Phil. 2:3,4; Col. 3: 12) in itself, and therefore expects all from its Lord. (Matt. 8:8,15,27,28)

The third lesson is: *the young Christian must not remain weak;* he must grow and increase in grace; he must make progress and become strong. God lays it upon us as a command. His word gives us concerning this point the most glorious promises. It lies in the nature of the thing: a child of God must and can make progress. The new life is a life that is healthy and strong: when a disciple surrenders himself to it, the growth certainly comes. (Judg. 5:31; Ps. 84:8, 92:13,14; Prov. 4:18; Isa. 40:31; Eph. 4:14; 1 Thess. 4:1; 2 Pet. 3:18)

The fourth and principal lesson, the lesson which young disciples of Christ have most need of is: *it is through the milk of the word that God's new-born infants can grow.* The new life from the Spirit of God can be sustained only by the word from the mouth of God. Your life, my young brother, will largely depend on whether you learn to deal wisely and well with God's word, or whether you learn to use the word from the beginning as your milk. (Ps. 19:8,11; 119:97,100; Isa. 55: 2,3; 1 Cor. 12:11)

See what a charming parable the Lord has given us here in the mother's milk. Out of her own life does the mother yield food and life to her child. The feeding of the child is the work of the tenderest love, in which the child is pressed to the breast, and is held in the closest fellowship with the mother. And the milk is just what the weak child requires, food gentle and yet strong.

Even so is there in the word of God the very life and power of God. (John 6:63; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 4:12) His tender love will through the word receive us into the gentlest and most intimate fellowship with Himself. (John 10:4) His love will give us out of the word what is, like warm soft milk, just fitted for our weakness. Let no one suppose that the word is too high or too hard for him. For the disciple who receives the word, and trustfully relies on Jesus to teach him by the Spirit, the word of God shall practically prove to be gentle sweet milk for new-born

infants. (Ps 119:18; John 14:26; Eph. 1:17-18)

Dear young Christian, would you continue standing, would you become strong, would you always live for the Lord? Then hear this day the voice of your Father: `As new-born babes, long for the spiritual milk that is without guile.' Receive this word into your heart and hold it fast as the voice of your Father: on your use of the word of God will your spiritual life depend. Let the word of God be precious to you above everything. (Ps 19:14,47,48,111,127)

Above all, forget not this: the word is the milk; the sucking or drinking on the part of the little child is the inner, living, blessed fellowship with the mother's love. Through the Holy Spirit your use of the milk of the word can become warm, living fellowship with the Living Love of your God. O long then very eagerly for the milk. Do not take the word as something that is hard and troublesome to understand: in that way you lose all delight in it. Receive it with trust in the love of the living God. With a tender motherly love will the Spirit of God teach and help you in your weakness. Believe always that the Spirit will make the word in you life and joy, a blessed fellowship with your God.

> Precious Saviour, Thou hast taught me to believe Thy word, and Thou hast made me by that faith a child of God. Through that word, as the milk of the new-born babes, wilt Thou also feed me. Lord, for this milk shall I be very eager: every day will I long after it. Teach me, through the Holy Spirit and the word, to walk and hold converse every day in living fellowship with the love of the Father. Teach me always to believe that the Spirit has been given me with the word. Amen.

1. What texts do you consider the best for proving that the Scriptures teach us that we must know we are children of God?
2. What are the three points in which the sucking child is to us a type of the young child in Christ in his dealing with the word?
3. What must a young Christian do when he has little blessing in the reading of God's word? He must set himself through faith in fellowship with Jesus Himself: he must reckon that Jesus will teach him through the Spirit and so trustfully continue in the reading.
4. One verse chosen to meet our needs, read ten times and then laid up in the heart, is better than ten verses read once. Only so much of the word as I actually receive and inwardly appropriate for myself, is food for my soul.
5. Choose out for yourselves what you consider one of the most glorious promises about making progress and becoming strong; learn it by heart, and repeat it continually as the language of your positive expectation.
6. Have you learned well to understand what the great means for growth in grace is?

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

III. GOD'S WORD IN OUR HEART

"Therefore shall ye lay up these My words in your heart and in your soul.' -- Deut. 11:18
"Son of man, all My words that I shall speak unto thee, receive in heart.' -- Ezek. 3:10
"Thy word have I laid up in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee.' - Ps. 119:11

Long *for the milk, that ye may grow thereby.* This charming word taught every young Christian that, if he would grow, he must receive the word as milk, as the living participation of the life and the love of God. On this account is it of so great importance to know well how we must deal with the word. The Lord says that we must receive it and lay it in our heart. (Deut. 30:14; Ps. 1:2; 119:34,36; Is. 51:7; John 5:38; 8:31; 15:7; Rom. 10:8-9; Col. 3:16) The word must possess and fill the heart. What does that mean?

The heart is the temple of God. In the temple there was an outer court and an inner sanctuary. So also is it in the heart. The gate of the court is the understanding; what I do not understand cannot enter into the heart. Through the outer gate of the understanding, the word comes into the court. (Ps. 119:34; Mat.. 13:19; Acts 8:30) There it is kept by memory and reflection. (Ps. 119:15,16) Still it is not yet properly in the heart. From the court there is an entrance into the innermost sanctuary; the entrance of the door is *faith.* What I believe, that I receive into my heart. (John 5:38; Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:10,17) Here it then becomes held fast in love and in the surrender of the will. Where this takes place, there the heart becomes the sanctuary of God. His law is there, as in the ark, and the soul cries out: `The law is within my heart.' (Ex. 25:16; Ps. 37:31; 40:9; Col. 3:16)

Young Christian, God has asked your heart, your love, your whole self. You have given yourself to Him. He has received you, and would have you and your heart entirely for Himself. He will make that heart full of His word. What is in the heart one holds dear, because one thinks continually on that which gives joy. God would have the word in the heart. Where His word is, there is He Himself and His might. He considers Himself bound to fulfil His word; when you have the word, you have God Himself to work in you. (Gen. 21:1; Josh. 23:14) He wills that you should receive and lay up His words in your heart: then will He greatly bless you. (Deut. 11:10; 28:1,2; Ps. 1:2,3; 119;14,45,98,165; John 27:6,8,17)

How I wish that I could bring all young Christians to receive simply that word of their Father, `Lay up My words in your heart,' and to give their whole heart to become full of God's word. Resolve then to do this. Take pains to understand what you read. When you understand it, take then always one or another word to keep in remembrance and ponder. Learn words of God by heart; repeat them to yourself in the course of the day. The word is seed; the seed must have time, must be kept in the ground: so must the word be carried in the heart. Give the best powers of your heart, your love, your desire, the willing and joyful activity of your will, to God's word. `Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night.' Let the heart be a temple, not for the world and its thoughts, but for God and His thoughts. (Ps. 119:69; John 15:3,7; 17:6,8,17) He that, every day, faithfully opens his heart to God's voice to hear what God says, and keeps and carries about that word, shall see how faithfully God also shall open His heart to our voice, to hear what we say to Him in prayer.

Dear Christian, pray read yet once again the words at the head of this section. Receive them as God's word to you -- the word of the Father who has received you as a child, of Jesus who has made you God's child. God asks of you, as His child, that you give your heart to become filled with His word. Will you do this? What say you? The Lord Jesus would complete His holy work in you with power along this way. (John 14:21,23; 1 John 2:14,24;

Rev. 3:8,10) Let your answer be distinct and continuous: `I have hid Thy word in my heart;' `How love I thy law: it is my mediation all the day.' Even if it appears difficult for you to understand the word, read it only the more. The Father has promised to make it a blessing in your heart. But you must first take it into your heart. Believe then that God will by the Holy Spirit make it living and powerful in you.

> O my Father, who hast said to me: `My son, give Me thine heart,' I have given Thee mine heart. Now that Thou chargest me to lay up and to keep Thy word in that heart, I answer: `I keep Thy commands with my whole heart.' Father, teach me every day so to receive Thy word in my heart that it can exercise there its blessed influence. Strengthen me in the deep conviction that even though I do not actually apprehend its meaning and power, I can still reckon on Thee to make the word living and powerful in me. Amen.

1. What is the difference between the reading of the word to increase knowledge and the receiving of it in faith?
2. The word is as a seed. Seed requires time ere it springs up. During this time it must be kept silently and constantly in the earth. I must not only read God's word, but ponder it and reflect upon it: then shall it work in me. The word must be in me the whole day, must abide in me, must dwell in me.
3. What are the reasons that the word of God sometimes has so little power in those that read it and really long for blessing? One of the principal reasons is surely that they do not give the seed time to grow, that they do not keep it and reflect upon it, in the believing assurance that the word itself shall have its working.
4. What is the token of His disciples that Jesus mentions first in the high-priestly prayer? (John 17)
5. What are the blessings of a heart filled with the word of God?

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

IV. FAITH

"Blessed is she that believed; for there shall be a fulfilment of the things which have been spoken to her from the Lord.' -- Luke 1:45

"I believe God, that it shall be even so as it hath been spoken unto me.' -- Acts 27:25

"Abraham waxed strong through faith, being fully assured that what He had promised, he was able also to perform.' -- Rom. 4:21

God has asked you to take and lay up His words in your heart. Faith is the proper avenue whereby the word is taken and received into the innermost depths of the heart. Let the young Christian then take pains always to understand better what faith is: he will thereby gain an insight into the reasons why such great things are bound up with faith. He will yield his perfect assent to the view that full salvation is made every day dependent on faith. (1 Chron. 22:20; Mk. 9:23; Heb. 11:33,35; 1 John 5:4,5)

Let me now ask my reader to read over once again the three texts which stand above, and to find out what is the principal thought that they teach about faith. Pray, read nothing actually beyond them, but read first these words of God, and ask yourself what they teach you about faith.

They make us see that faith always attaches itself to what God has said or promised. When an honourable man says anything, he also does it: on the back of the saying follows the doing. So also is it with God: when He would do anything, He says so first through His word. When the man of God becomes possessed with this conviction and established in it, God always does for him what He has said. With God, speaking and doing always go together: the deed follows the word: `Shall He say it and not do it?' (Gen. 21:1; 32:12; Num. 14:17,18,20; 23:19; Josh. 21:45; 23:14; 2 San. 7:25,29; 1 Chron. 8:15,24; Ps. 119:49) When I have a word of God in which He promises to do something, I can always remain sure that He will do it. I have simply to take and hold fast the word, and there with wait upon God: God will take care that He fulfils His word to me. Before I ever feel or experience anything, I hold fast the promise, and I know by faith that God will make it good to me. (Luke 1:38,45; John 3:33; 4:50; 11:40; 20:29; Heb. 11:11,18)

What, now, is faith? Nothing other than the certitude that what God says is true. When God says that something subsists or is, then does faith rejoice, although it sees nothing of it. (Rom. 1:17; 4:5; 5:1; Gal. 3:27; Eph. 1:19; 3:17) When God says that He has given me something, that something in heaven is mine, I know by faith with entire certitude that it is mine. (John 3:16,17,36; 1 John 5:12,13) When God says that something shall come to pass, or that He will do something for me, this is for faith just as good as if I had seen it. (Rom. 8:38; Phil. 3:21; 1 Thess 5:24; 1 Pet. 1:4,5) Things that are, but that I have not seen, and things that are not yet, but shall come, are for faith entirely sure. `Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen.' (Heb. 11:1) Faith always asks only for what God has said, and then relies on His faithfulness and power to fulfil His word.

Let us now review again the words of Scripture. Of Mary we read: `Blessed is she that believed; for there shall be a fulfilment of the things which have been spoken to her from the Lord.' All things that have been spoken in the word shall be fulfilled for me: so I believe them.

Of Abraham it is reported that he was fully assured that that which had been promised, God was also able to fulfil. This is assurance of faith: to be assured that God will do what He has promised.

Exactly thus is it in the word of Paul: `I believe God that it shall be even so as it hath been spoken unto me.' It

stood fixed with him that God would do what He had spoken.

Young disciples in Christ, the new, the eternal life that is in you is a life of faith. And do you not see how simple and how blessed that life of faith is? I go every day to the word and hear there what God has said that He has done and will do. (Gal. 2:20; 3:2,5; 5:5,6; Heb. 10:35; 1 Pet. 1:2) I take time to lodge in my heart the word in which God says that, and I hold it fast, entirely assured that what God has promised, He is able to perform. And then in a childlike spirit I await the fulfilment of all the glorious promises of His word. And my soul experiences: Blessed is she that believed; for the things that have been spoken to her from the Lord shall be fulfilled. God promises -- I believe -- God fulfils: that is the secret of the new life.

> O my Father, Thy child thanks Thee for this blessed life of faith in which we have to walk. I can do nothing, but Thou canst do all. All that Thou canst do hast Thou spoken in Thy word. And every word that I take and trustfully bring to Thee, Thou fulfillest. Father, in this life of faith, so simple, so glorious, will I walk with Thee. Amen.

1. The Christian must read and search the Scriptures to increase his knowledge. For this purpose he daily reads one or more principal portions. But he reads the Scriptures also to strengthen his faith. And to this end he must take one or two verses to make them the subject of special reflection, and to appropriate them trustfully for himself.

2. Pray, do not suffer yourselves to be led astray by those who speak as if faith were something great and unintelligible. Faith is nothing other than the certitude that God speaks truth. Take some promises of God and say to Him: I know for certain that this promise is truth, and that Thou wilt fulfil it. He will do it.

3. Never mourn over unbelief as if it were only a weakness which you cannot help. As God's child, however weak you may be, you have the power to believe, for the spirit of God is in you. You have only to keep in mind this: no one apprehends anything before that he has the power to believe; he must simply begin and continue with saying to the Lord that he is sure that His word is truth. He must hold fast the promise and rely upon God for the fulfilment.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

V. THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD

`Faith cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.' -- Rom. 10:17

`Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.' -- James 1:21

`We also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe.' -- 1 Thess. 2:13

`For the word of God is living and active.' -- Heb. 4:12

The new life of a child of God depends so much on the right use of God's word, that I shall once again speak of it with my young brothers and sisters in the Lord.

It is a great thing when the Christian discerns that he can receive and accomplish all only through faith. He has only to believe; God will look to the fulfilling of what is promised. He has every morning to trust in Jesus, and the new life as given in Jesus and working in himself; Jesus will see to it that the new life works in him.

But now he runs the risk of another error. He thinks that the faith that does such great things must be something great, and that he must have a great power in order to exercise such a great faith. (Luke 17:5-6; Rom. 10:6-8) And, because he does not feel this power, he thinks that he cannot believe as he ought. This error may prove a loss to him his life long.

Come and hear, then, how perverted this thought is. You must not bring this mighty faith to get the word fulfilled, but the word comes and brings you this faith which you must have. "The word is living and powerful." The word works faith in you. The Scripture says, "Faith is by the word." (Rom. 10:17; Heb. 4:12)

Think on what we have said of the heart as a temple, and of its two divisions. There is the outer court, with the understanding as its gate or entrance. There is the innermost sanctuary, with the faith of the heart as its entrance. There is a natural faith -- the historic faith -- which every man has; with this must I first receive the word into my keeping and consideration. I must say to myself, "The word of God is certainly true. I can make a stand upon it." Thus I bring the word into the outer court, and from within the heart desire reaches out to it, seeking to receive it into the heart. The word now exercises its divine power of life; it begins to grow and shoot out roots. As a seed which I place in the earth sends forth roots and presses still deeper into the soil, the word presses inwardly into the holy place. The word thus works true saving faith. (1 Thess. 2:13; Jas. 1:21; 1 Pet. 1:23)

Young Christian, pray understand this. The word is living and powerful; through the word you are born again. The word works faith in you; through the word comes faith. Receive the word simply with the thought that it will work in you. Keep yourselves occupied with the word, and give it time. The word has a divine life in itself; carry it in your inmost parts, and it will work life in you. It will work in you a faith strong and able for anything.

O be resolved then, pray, never to say, I cannot believe. You can believe. You have the Spirit of God in you. Even the natural man can say, This word of God is certainly true or certainly not true. And when he with a desire of the soul says, "It is true; I will believe it," the living Spirit, through whom the word is living and powerful, works this living faith. Besides, the Spirit is not only in the word, but also in you. Although you do not feel as if you were believing, know for certain you can believe. (Deut. 32:46,47; Josh. 1:7,9) Begin actually to receive the word; it will work a mighty faith in you. Rely upon it, that when you have to do with God's word, you have to do with a word that can be surely trusted that it of itself works faith in you.

And not only the promises, but also the commands have this living power. When I first receive a command from God, it is as if I felt no power to accomplish it. But if I then simply receive the word as God's word, which works in those that believe, -- if I trust in the word to have its working, and in the living God which gives it its operation, -- that commandment will work in me the desire and the power for obedience. When I weigh and hold fast the command, it works the desire and the will to obey; it urges me strongly towards the conviction that I can certainly do what my Father says. The word works both faith and obedience of faith. I must believe that through the Spirit I have the power to do what God wills, for in the word the power of God works in me. The word, as the command of the living God who loves me, is my power. (Rom. 1:3; 16:6; Gal. 6:6; 1 Thess. 1:3; Jas. 1:21)

Therefore, young disciples in Christ, learn to receive God's word trustfully. Although you do not at first understand it, continue to meditate upon it. It has a living power in it; it will glorify itself. Although you feel no power to believe or to obey, the word is living and powerful. Take it, and hold it fast; it will accomplish its work with divine power. The word rouses and strengthens for faith and obedience.

> Lord God, I begin to conceive how Thou art in Thy word with Thy life and Thy power, and how that word itself works faith and obedience in the heart that receives and keeps it. Lord, teach me to carry Thy every word as a living seed in my heart, in the assurance that it shall work in me all Thy good pleasure. Amen

1. Forget not that it is one and the same to believe in the word, or in the person that speaks the word, or in the thing which is promised in the word. The very same faith that receives the promises receives also the Father who promises, and the Son with the salvation which is given in the promises. Pray see to it that you never separate the word and the living God from each other.

2. See to it also that you apprehend thoroughly the distinction betwixt the reception of the word "as the word of man" and "as the word of God, which works in you that believe."

3. I think that you now know what is necessary to become strong in faith. Exercise as much faith as you have. Take a promise of God. Say to yourself that it is certainly true. Go to God and say to Him that you rely on Him for the fulfilment. Ponder the promise, and cleave to it in converse with God. Rely upon Him to do for you what He says. He will surely do it.

4. The Spirit and the word always go together. I can be sure concerning all of which the word says that I must do it, that I also can do it through the Spirit. I must receive the word and also the command in the confidence that it is the living word of the living God which also works in us who believe.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

VI. GOD'S GIFT OF HIS SON

`For God so loved the world, that He have His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life.' -- John 3:16
`Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift.' -- 2 Cor. 9:15

Thus dear did God hold the world. How dear? That He gave His only-begotten Son for every one in the world who will trust in Him. And how did He give? He gave Him, in His birth as man, in order to be for ever one with us. He gave Him, in His death on the cross as Surety, in order to take our sin and curse upon Himself. He gave Him on the throne of heaven, in order to arrange for our welfare, as our Representative and Intercessor over all the powers of heaven. He gave Him in the outpouring of the Spirit, in order to dwell in us, to be entirely and altogether our own. (John 1:14,16; 14:23; Rom. 5:8; 8:32,34; Eph. 1:22; 3:17; Col. 2:9-10; Heb. 7:24,26; 1 John 4:9-10) Yes; that is the love of God, that He gave His Son to us, for us, in us.

Nothing less than His Son Himself. This is the love of God; not that He gives us something, but that He gives us some one -- a living person -- not one or another blessing, but Him in whom is all life and blessing -- Jesus Himself. Not simply forgiveness, or revival, or sanctification, or glory does He give us; but Jesus, His own Son. The Lord Jesus is the beloved, the equal, the bosom-friend, the eternal blessedness of the Father. And it is the will of the Father that we should have Jesus as ours, even as He has Him. (Matt. 11:27; John 17:23,25; Rom. 8:38-39; Heb. 2:11) For this end He gave Him to us. The whole of salvation consists in this: to have, to possess, to enjoy Jesus. God has given His Son, given Him wholly to become ours. (Ps. 73:25; 142:6; John 20:28; Heb. 3:14)

What have we, then, to do? To take Him, to receive and to appropriate to ourselves the gift, to enjoy Jesus as our own. This is eternal life. `He that hath the Son hath life.' (John 1:12; 2 Cor. 3:13,5; Col. 2:6; 1 John 5:12)

How I do wish, then, that all young Christians may understand this. The one great work of God's love for us is, He gives us His Son. In Him we have all. Hence the one great work of our heart must be to receive this Jesus who has been given to us, to consider Him and use Him as ours. I must begin every day anew with the thought, I have Jesus to do all for me. (John 15:5; Rom. 8:37; 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:3; 2:10; Phil. 4:13; 2 Tim. 1:12) In all weakness or darkness or danger, in the case of every desire or need, let your first thought always be, I have Jesus to make everything right for me, for God has given Him to me. Whether your need be forgiveness or consolation or confirmation, whether you have fallen, or are tempted to fall, into danger, whether you know not what the will of God is in one or another matter, or know that you have not the courage and the strength to do this will, let this always be your first thought, the Father has given me Jesus to care for me.

For this purpose, reckon upon this gift of God every day as yours. It has been presented to you in the word. Appropriate the Son in faith on the word. Take Him anew every day. Through faith you have the Son. (John 1:12; 1 John 5:9,13) The love of God has given the Son. Take Him, and hold Him fast in the love of your heart. (1 John 4:4,19) It is to bring life, eternal life, to you that God has given Jesus. Take Him up into your life; let heart and tongue and whole walk be under the might and guidance of Jesus. (2 Cor. 5:15; Phil 3:8) Young Christian, so weak and so sinful, listen, pray, to that word. God has given you Jesus. He is yours. Taking is nothing else but the fruit of faith. The gift is for me. He will do all for you.

O my Lord Jesus, today anew, and every day, I take Thee. In all Thy fulness, in all Thy relations, without ceasing, I take Thee for myself. Thee, who art my Wisdom, my Light, my Leader, I take as my Prophet. Thee, who dost perfectly reconcile me, and bring me near to God, who dost purify and sanctify me and pray for me, I take as my Priest. Thee, who dost guide and keep and bless me, I take as my King. Thou, Lord, art All, and Thou art wholly mine. Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift. Amen.

1. Ponder much the word Give. God gives in a wonderful way: from the heart, completely for nothing, to the unworthy. And He gives effectually. What He gives He will really make entirely our possession, and inwardly appropriate for us. Believe this, and you shall have the certitude that Jesus will, to the full, come into your possession, with all that He brings.

2. Ponder much also that other word Take. To take Jesus, and to hold Him fast and use Him when received, is our great work. And that taking is nothing but trusting. He is mine with all that He has. Take Jesus -- the full Jesus -- every day as yours. This is the secret of the life of faith.

3. Then weigh well also the word Have. `He that hath the Son hath light.' What I have is mine, for my use and service. I can dispose of it, and can have the full enjoyment of it. `He that hath the Son hath life.'

4. Mark especially that what God gives, and what you take, and what you now have, is nothing less than the living Son of God.

Do you receive this?

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

VII. JESUS' SURRENDER OF HIMSELF

`Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself up for it; that He might sanctify it; that He might present the Church to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle; but that it should be holy and without blemish.' -- *Eph. 5:24-47*

So great and wonderful was the work that Jesus had to do for the sinner, that nothing less was necessary than that He should give Himself to do that work. So great and wonderful was the love of Jesus towards us, that He actually gave Himself for us and to us. So great and wonderful is the surrender of Jesus, that all that same thing for which He gave Himself can actually and completely come to pass in us. For Jesus, the Holy, the Almighty, has taken it upon Himself to do it: He gave *Himself* for us. (Gal. 1:4; 2:20; Eph. 5:2,25; 1 Tim. 2:6; Titus 2:14) And now the one thing that is necessary is that we should rightly understand and firmly believe this His surrender for us.

To what end, then, was it that He gave Himself for the Church? Hear what God says. In order that He might sanctify it, in order that it might be without blemish. (Eph. 1:4; 5:27; Col. 1:22; 1 Thess. 2:10; 3:13; 5:23,24) This is the aim of Jesus. This His aim He will reach in the soul according as the soul falls in with it so as to make this also its highest portion, and then relies upon Jesus' surrender of Himself to do it.

Hear still a word of God: `Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works.' (Titus 2:14) Yes: it is to prepare for Himself a *pure* people, a people *of His own,* a *zealous* people, that Jesus gives Himself. When I receive Him, when I believe that He gave Himself to do this for me, I shall certainly experience it. I shall be purified through Him, shall be held fast as His possession, and be filled with zeal and joy to work for Him.

And mark, further, how the operation of this surrender of Himself will especially be that He shall then have us entirely for Himself: `that He might present us to Himself.' `that He might purify us to Himself, a people of His own.' The more I understand and contemplate Jesus' surrender of Himself for me, the more do I give myself again to Him. The surrender is a mutual one: the love comes from both sides. His giving of Himself makes such an impression on my heart, that my heart with the self-same love and joy becomes entirely His. Through giving Himself to me, He of Himself takes possession of me; He becomes mine and I His. I know that I have Jesus wholly for me, and that He has me wholly for Him. (Ex. 19:4,5; Deut. 26:17,18; Isa. 41:9,10; 1 Cor. 6:19,20; 1 Pet. 2:10)

And how come I then to the full enjoyment of this blessed life? `I live in faith, *the faith* which is in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.' (John 6:29,35; 7:38; 10:10,38; Gal. 2:20) Through faith I reflect upon and contemplate His surrender to me as sure and glorious. Through faith I appropriate it. Through faith I trust in Jesus to confirm this surrender, to communicate Himself to me and reveal Himself within me. Through faith I await with certainty the full experience of salvation which arises from having Jesus as mine, to do all, all for me. Through faith, I live in this Jesus who loved me and gave Himself for me. and I say, `No longer do I live, but Christ liveth in me.' Christian, pray believe it with your whole heart: Jesus gives Himself for you: He is wholly yours: He will do all for you. (Matt. 8:10; 9:2,22; Mark 11:24; Luke 7:50; 8:48; 17:19; 18:42; Rom. 4:16,21; 5:2; 11:20; Gal. 3:25,26; Eph. 1:19; 3:17)

O my Lord Jesus, what wonderful grace is this, that Thou gavest Thyself for me. In Thee is eternal life. Thou Thyself art the life and Thou givest Thyself to be in my life all that I need. Thou purifiest me and sanctifiest me, and makest me zealous in good works. Thou takest me wholly for Thyself, and givest Thyself wholly for me. Yes, my Lord, in all thou art my life. O make me rightly understand this. Amen.

1. It was in His great love that the Father gave the Son. It was out of love that Jesus gave Himself. (Rom. 3:15; Eph. 5:26) The taking, the having of Jesus, is the entrance to a life in the love of God: this is the highest life. (John 14:21,23,; 17:23,26; Eph. 3:17,18) Through faith we must press into love, and dwell there. (1 John 4:16-18)

2. Do you think that you have now learned all the lesson, to begin every day with the childlike trust: I take Jesus this day to be my life, and to do all for me.

3. Understand that to take and to have Jesus, presupposes a personal dealing with Himself. To have pleasure in Him, to hold converse gladly with Him, to rejoice in Him as my friend and in His love -- to this leads the faith that truly takes Him.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

VIII. CHILDREN OF GOD

`As many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name.' -- John 1:12

What is given must be received, otherwise it does not profit. If the first great deed of God's love is the gift of His Son, the first work of man must be to receive this Son. And if all the blessings of God's love come to us only in the ever-new, ever-living Son of the Father, all these blessings enter into us from day to day through the always-new, always-continuing reception of the Son.

What is necessary for this reception, you, beloved young Christians, know, for you have already received the Lord Jesus. But all that this reception involves must become clearer and stronger, the unceasing living action of your faith. (2 Cor. 10:15; 1 Thess. 1:8; 3:10; 2 Thess. 1:3) Herein especially consists the increase of faith. Your first receiving of Jesus rested on the certitude which the word gave you, that He was for you. Through the word must your soul be still further filled with the assurance that all that is in Him is literally and really for you, given by the Father in Him to be your life.

The impulse to your first receiving was found in your want and necessity. Through the Spirit you become still poorer in spirit, and you see everything every moment: this leads to a ceaseless, ever-active taking of Him as your all. (Matt 5:3; 2 Cor. 3:10,13,16; 6:10; Eph. 4:14,15; Col. 2:6)

Your first receiving consisted in nothing but the appropriation by faith of what you could not yet see or feel. That same faith must be continually exercised in saying: all that I see in Jesus is for me: I take it as mine, although I do not yet experience it. The love of God is a communicating, a ceaseless outstreaming of His light of life over the soul, a very powerful and veritable giving of Jesus: our life is nothing but a continuous blessed apprehension and reception of Him. (John 1:16; Col. 2:9,10; 3:3)

And this is the way to live as children of God: as many as receive Him, to them gives He the power to become children of God. This holds true, not only of conversion and regeneration, but of every day of my life. If to walk in all things as a child of God, and to exhibit the image of my Father, is indispensable, I must take Jesus the only-begotten Son: it is He that makes me a child of God. To have Jesus Himself, to have the heart and life full of Him, is the way to live as a child of God. I go to the word and learn there all the characteristics of a child of God; (Matt 5:9,16,44,45; Rom. 8:14; Eph. 1:4,5; 5:1,2; Phil. 2:15; Heb. 2:10; 1 Pet. 1:14,17; 1 John 3:1,10; 5:1,3) and after each one of them I write: this Jesus shall work in me: I *have* him to make me to be a child of God.

Beloved young Christian, learn, I beseech you, to understand the simplicity and the glory of being a true Christian. It is to receive Jesus, to receive Him in all His fulness, to receive Him in all the glorious relations in which the Father gives Him to you. Take Him as your Prophet, as your Wisdom, your Light, your Guide. Take Him as your Priest, who renews you, purifies you, sanctifies you, brings you near to God, takes you and forms you wholly for His service. Take Him as your King who governs you, protects you and blesses you. Take him as your Head, your Exemplar, your Brother, your Life, your All. The giving of God is a divine, an ever-progressive and effectual communication to your soul. Let your taking be the childlike, cheerful, continuous opening of mouth and heart for what God gives, the full Jesus and all His grace. To every prayer the answer of God is: Jesus, all is in Him, all in Him is for you. Let your response always be: Jesus, in Him I have all. You are, you live in all things as, `children of God, through faith in Jesus Christ.'

> O my Father, open the eyes of my heart to understand what it is to be a child of God: to live always as a child through always believing in Jesus, Thine only Son. O let every breath of my soul be, faith in Jesus, a confidence in Him, a resting in Him, a surrender to Him, to work all in me.

If by the grace of God you now know that you have received Jesus and are God's child, you must now take pains to make His salvation known. There is many a one who longs to know and cannot find out how he can become a child of God.

Endeavour to make two things plain to him. First, that the new birth is something so high and holy that he can do nothing in it. He must receive eternal life from God through the Spirit: he must be born from above. This Jesus teaches. (John 3:1-8). Then make plain to him how low God has descended to us with this new life, and how near He brings it to us. In Jesus there is life for every one who believes in Him. This Jesus teaches (John 3:14-18). And this Jesus and the life are in the word. Tell the sinner that, when he takes the word, he then has Jesus, and life in the word. (Rom. 10:8). O do, pray, take pains to tell forth the glad tidings that we become children of God only through faith in Jesus.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

IX. OUR SURRENDER TO JESUS

`They gave their own selves to the Lord.' -- Cor. 8:5

In the surrender of Jesus for me, I have the chief element of what He has done and always does for me. In my surrender to Him I have the chief element of what He would have me to do. For young Christians who have given themselves to Jesus, it is a matter of great moment always to hold fast, to confirm and renew this surrender. This is the special life of faith, to say anew every day: I have given myself to Him, to follow Him and to serve Him; (Matt. 4:22; 10:24,25,37,38; Luke 18:22; John 12:25,26; 2 Cor. 5:15) He has taken me: I am His, and entirely at His service. (Matt. 28:20)

Young Christian, hold firm your surrender, and make it always firmer. When there recurs a stumbling or a sin after you have surrendered yourself, think not the surrender was not sincere. No; the surrender to Jesus does not make us perfect at once. You have sinned, because you were not thoroughly or firmly enough in His arms. Adhere to this, although it be with shame: Lord, Thou knowest it, I have given myself to Thee: I am Thine. (John 21:17; Gal. 6:1; 1 Thess. 5:24; 2 Tim. 2:13; 1 John 5:16) Confirm this surrender anew. Say to Him that you now begin to see better how complete the surrender to Him must be, and renew every day the voluntary, entire, and undivided offering up of yourselves to Him. (Luke 28:28; Phil. 3:7,8)

The longer we continue Christians, the deeper will be our insight into that word: surrender to Jesus. We shall always see more clearly that we do not yet fully understand or contemplate it. The surrender must become, especially, more undivided and trustful. The language which Ahab once used must be ours: `According to thy saying, my lord, O king, I am thine, and all that I have' (1 Kings 20:4). This is the language of undivided dedication: I am thine, and all that I have. Keep nothing back. Keep back no single sin that you do not confess and leave off. Without conversion there can be no surrender. (Matt. 7:21,27; John 3:20,21; 2 Tim. 2:19,21) Keep back no single power. Let your head with all its thinking, your mouth with all its speaking, your heart with all its feeling, your hand with all its working -- let your time, your name, your influence, your property, let all be laid upon the altar. (Rom. 6:13,22; 12:1; 2 Cor. 5:15; Heb. 8:15; 1 Pet. 2:5) Jesus has a right to all: He demands the whole. Give yourself, with all that you have, to be guided and used and kept, sanctified and blessed. `According to Thy word, my Lord, O King, I am Thine, and all that I have.'

That is the language of trustful dedication. It is on the word of the Lord, which calls upon you to surrender yourself, that you have done this. That word is your warrant that He will take and guide and keep you. As surely as you give yourself, does He take you; and what He takes He can keep. Only, we must not take it again out of His hand. Let it remain fixed with you that your surrender is in the highest degree pleasing to Him: be certain of it, your offering is a sweet-smelling savour. Not on what you are, or what you experience or discover in yourselves, do you say this, but on His word. According to His word, you are able to take a stand on this: what you give, that He takes; and what He takes, that He keeps. (John 10:28; 2 Thess. 3:3; 2 Tim. 1:12) Therefore every day anew, let this be the childlike joyful activity of your life of faith: you surrender yourselves without ceasing to Jesus, and you are safe in the certitude that He in His love takes and holds you fast, and that His answer to your giving is the renewed and always deeper surrender of Himself to you.

According to Thy word, my Lord and King, I am Thine, and all that I have. Every day, this day, will I confirm it, that I am not mine own, but am my Lord's. Fervently do I beseech Thee to take full possession of Thy property, so that no one may doubt whose I am. Amen.

1. Ponder now once again the words *giving* and *taking* and *having*. What I give to Jesus, He take with a divine taking. And what He takes, he has and thereafter cares for. Now it is absolutely no longer mine. I must not take thought for it; I may not dispose of it. O pray, let your faith find expression in adoration: Jesus takes me: Jesus has me.

2. Should there overtake you a time of doubting or darkness whereby your assurance that the Lord has received you has come to be lost, suffer not yourself thereby to be dispirited. Come simply as a sinner, confess your sins: believe in His promises that He will by no means cast out those that come to Him and begin simply on the ground of the promises to say: I know that He has received me.

3. Forget not what the chief element in surrender is: it is a surrender to Jesus and to His love. Fix your eye, not upon your activity in surrender, but upon Jesus, who calls you, who takes you, who can do all for you. This it is that makes faith strong.

4. Faith is always a surrender. Faith is the eye for seeing the invisible. When I look at something, I surrender myself to the impression which it make upon me. Faith is the ear that hearkens to the voice of God. When I believe a message, I surrender myself to the influence, cheering or saddening, which the tidings exercises upon me. When I believe in Jesus, I surrender myself to Him, in reflection, in desire, in expectation, in order that He may be in me and do that for which He has been given to me by God.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

X. SAVIOUR FROM SIN

`Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for it is He that shall save His people from their sins.' -- *Matt. 1:21*
`Ye know that He was manifested to take away sins; and in Him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not.' -- *1 John 3:5,6*

It is sin that is the cause of our misery. It is sin that provoked God, and brought His curse upon man. He hates sin with a perfect hatred, and will do everything to root it out. (Deut. 27:26; Isa. 59:1,2; Jer. 44:4; Rom. 1:18) It is to take away sin that God gave His Son, that Jesus gave Himself. (Gal. 2:4; Eph. 5:25,27; 1 Pet. 2:24; 1 John 3:8) It belongs to God to set us free, not only from punishment and curse, from disquietude and terror, but from sin itself. (Jer. 27:9; 1 Pet. 1:2,15,16; 2:14; 1 John 3:8) You know that He was manifested that He might take away our sins. Let us receive the thought deep into our hearts: it is for God to take away our sins from us. The better we apprehend this, the more blessed shall our life be.

All do not receive this. They seek chiefly to be freed from the consequences of sin, from fear and darkness, and the punishment that sin brings. (Gen. 27:34; Isa. 58:5,6; John 6:26; Jas. 4:3) Just on this account they do not come to the true rest of salvation. They do not understand that to save is to free from sin. Let us hold it fast. Jesus saves through taking away sin. Then we shall learn two things.

The first is to come to Jesus with every sin. (Ps. 32:5; Luke 7:38; 19:7,8,10; John 8:11; 34:36) the sin that still attacks and overmasters you, after that you have given yourself over to the Lord, must not make you lose heart. There must also be no endeavour merely in your own strength to take away and overcome sin. Bring every sin to Jesus. He has been ordained by God to take away sin. He has already brought it to nought upon the cross, and broken its power. (Heb. 9:26) It is His work, it is His desire to set you free from it. O learn then always to come to Jesus with every sin. Sin is your deadly foe: if you confess it to Jesus, and surrender it to Him, you shall certainly overcome it. (Rom. 7:4,9; 8:2; 2 Cor. 7:9; 2 Thess 2:3)

Learn to believe this firmly: this is the second point. Understand that Jesus, Jesus Himself, is the Saviour from sin. It is not you that must overcome sin with the help of Jesus, but Jesus Himself: Jesus in you. (Deut. 8:17,18; Ps. 44:4,8; John 16:33; 1 John 5:4,5) If you would thus become free from sin, if you would enjoy full salvation, let it be the one endeavour of your life to stand always in full fellowship with Jesus. Wait not till you enter into temptation ere you have recourse to Jesus. But let your life beforehand be always through Jesus. Let His nearness be your one desire; Jesus saves from sin; to have Jesus is salvation from sin (1 Cor. 15:10; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 4:13; Col 3:3-5) O that we could indeed rightly understand this! Jesus will not merely save from sin as a work that He will from time to time do in us, but He will give it as a blessing through Himself to us and in us. (Ex. 29:43; John 15:4,5; Rom. 8:10; Eph. 3:17,18) When Jesus fills me, when Jesus is all for me, sin has no hold on me: `He that abideth in Him sinneth not.'

Yes: sin is driven out and kept out only through the presence of Jesus. It is Jesus, Jesus Himself, that, through His giving Himself to me and His living in me, is salvation from sin.

> Precious Lord, let Thy light stream over me, and let it become still clearer to my soul, that Thou, Thou Thyself, art my salvation. To have Thee, Thee, with me, in me -- this keeps sin out. Teach me

to bring every sin to Thee; let every sin drive me into a closer alliance with Thee. Then shall Thy Jesus-name become truly my salvation from sin. Amen.

1. See of what moment it is that the Christian should always grow in the knowledge of sin. The sin that I do not know, I cannot bring to Jesus. The sin that I do not bring to Him is not taken out of me.

2. To know sin better there are required:

The constant prayer, `Examine me:' make known to me my transgression and my sin (Job 13:23; Ps. 139:23,24);

A tender conscience that is willing to be convinced of sin through the Spirit, as He also uses the conscience for this end;

The very humble surrender to the word, to think concerning sin only as God thinks.

3. The deeper knowledge of sin will be found in these results:

That we shall see to be sin things which previously we did not regard in this light;

That we shall perceive more the exceedingly sinful, the detestable character of sin (Rom. 7:13);

That with the overcoming of external sins we become all the more encouraged over the deep sinfulness of our nature, of the enmity of our flesh against God. Then we give up all hope of being or of doing anything good, and we are turned wholly to live in faith through the Spirit.

4. O let us thank God very heartily that Jesus is a Saviour *from sin*. The power that sin has had over us, Jesus now has. The place that sin has taken in the heart, Jesus will now take. `The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the law of sin and death.'

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XI. THE CONFESSION OF SIN

`If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' -- 1 John 1:9

The one thing that God hates, that grieves Him, that He is provoked by, and that He will destroy, is sin. The one thing that makes man unhappy, is sin. (Gen. 6:5,6; Isa. 13:24; Ezek. 33:6; Rev. 6:16,17) The one thing for which Jesus had to give His blood was sin. In all the intercourse betwixt the sinner and God, this is thus the first thing that the sinner must bring to his God -- sin. (Judg. 10:10,15,16; 2 Chron. 27:14; Ezra 9:6; Neh. 2:33; 9:2,33; Jer. 3:21,25; Dan. 9:4,5,20)

When you came to Jesus at first, you perceived this in some measure. But you should learn to understand this lesson more deeply. The one counsel concerning sin is, to bring it daily to the only One who can take it away -- God Himself. You should learn that one of the greatest privileges of a child of God is -- the confession of sin. It is only the holiness of God that can consume sin; through confession I must hand over my sin to God, lay it down in God, get quit of it to God, cast it into the fiery oven of God's holy love which burns against sin like a fire. God, yes, God Himself, and He alone, takes away sin. (Lev. 4:21; Num. 5:7; 2 Sam. 12:13: Ps. 32:5, 38:19; 51:5,19)

This the Christian does not always understand. He has an inborn tendency to desire to cover sin, or to make it less, or to root it out only when he purposes drawing near to God. He thinks to cover sin with his repentance and self-blame, with scorn of the temptation that came to him, or otherwise with what he has done or still hopes to do. (Gen. 3:12; Ex. 32:22,24; Isa. 1:11,15; Luke 13:26) Young Christian, if you would enjoy the gladness of a complete forgiveness and a divine cleansing of sin, see to it that you use aright the confession of sin. In the true confession of sin you have one of the most blessed privileges of a child of God, one of the deepest roots of a powerful spiritual life.

For this end, let your confession be a definite one. (Num 12:11, 21:7; 2 Sam. 24;10,17; Isa. 59:12,13; Luke 23:41; Acts 1:18,19; 22:19,20; 1 Tim. 1:13,15) The continued indeterminate confession of sin does more harm than good. It is much better to say to God that you have nothing to confess, than to confess you know not what. Begin with one sin. Let it come to a complete harmony betwixt God and you concerning this one sin. Let it be fixed with you that this sin is through confession placed in God's hands. you shall experience that in such confession there are both power and blessing.

Let the confession be an upright one. (Prov. 28:13; Lev. 26:40,41; Jer. 31:18,19) By it deliver up the sinful deed to be laid aside. By it deliver up the sinful feeling with a view to trusting in God. Confession implies renunciation, the putting off of sin. Give up sin to God, to forgive it to you, and to cleanse you from it. Do not confess, if you are not prepared, if you do not heartily desire to be freed from it. Confession has value only as it is a giving up of sin to God.

Let the confession be trustful (2 Sam. 12:13; Ps. 32:5; Isa. 4:7) Reckon firmly upon God actually to forgive you, and also to cleanse you from sin. Continue in confession, in casting the sin of which you desire to be rid into the fire of God's holiness until your soul has the firm confidence that God takes it on His own account to forgive and to cleanse away. It is this faith that really overcomes the world and sin: the faith that God in Jesus really emancipates from sin. (1 John 5:5; 2:12)

Brother, do you understand it now? What must you do with sin, with every sin? To bring it in confession to God, to give it to God; God alone takes away sin.

> Lord God, what thanks shall I express for this unspeakable blessing, that I may come to Thee with sin. It is known to Thee, Lord, how sin before Thy holiness causes terror and flight. It is known to Thee how it is our deepest thought, first to have sin covered, and then to come to Thee with our desire and endeavour for good. Lord, teach me to come to Thee with sin, every sin, and in confession to lay it down before Thee and give it up to Thee. Amen.

1. What is the distinction betwixt the covering of sin by God and by man? How does man do it? How does God do it?

2. What are the great hindrances in the way of the confession of sin?

Ignorance about sin.

Fear to come with sin to the holy God.

The endeavour to come to God with something good.

Unbelief in the power of the blood and in the riches of grace.

3. Must I immediately confess an oath or a lie or a wrong word, or wait until my feeling has first cooled and become rightly disposed? O pray, confess it immediately; come in full sinfulness to God, without first desiring to make it less!

4. Is it also necessary or good to confess before man? It is indispensable, if our sin has been against man. And, besides, it is often good; it is often easier to acknowledge before God than before man that I have done something (Jas. 5:16).

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XII. THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

`Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.' -- Ps. 32:1
`Bless the Lord, O my soul .... who forgiveth all thine iniquities.' -- Ps. 103;2,3

In connection with surrender to the Lord, it was said that the first great blessing of the grace of God was this -- the free, complete, everlasting forgiveness of all your sins. For the young Christian it is of great moment that he should stand fast in this forgiveness of his sins, and always carry the certitude of it about with him. To this end, he must especially consider the following truths.

The forgiveness of our sin is a complete forgiveness. (Ps. 103:12; Isa. 38:17; 55:7; Micah 7:18,19; Heb. 10:16-18) God does not forgive by halves. Even with man, we reckon a half forgiveness no true forgiveness. The love of God is so great, and the atonement in the blood of Jesus so complete and powerful, that God always forgives completely. Take time with God's word to come under the full impression that your guilt has been blotted out wholly and altogether. God thinks absolutely no more of your sins. `I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more.' (Jer. 31:34; Heb. 8:12; 10:17)

The forgiveness of our sin restores us entirely again to the love of God. (Hos. 14:5; Luke 15:22; Acts 26:18; Rom. 5:1,5) Not only does God not impute sin any more, -- that is but one half, -- but He reckons to us the righteousness of Jesus also, so that for His sake we are as dear to God as He is. Not only is wrath turned away from us, but the fulness of love now rests upon us. `I will love them freely, for Mine anger is turned away from him.' Forgiveness is access to all the love of God. On this account, forgiveness is also introduction to all the other blessings of redemption.

Live in the full assurance of forgiveness, and let the Spirit fill your heart with the certitude and the blessedness of it, and you shall have great confidence in expecting all from God. Learn from the word of God, through the Spirit, to know God aright, and to trust Him as the ever-forgiving God. That is His name and His glory. To one to whom much, yea, all is forgiven, He will also give much. He will give all. (Ps. 103:3; Isa. 12:1,3; Rom. 5:10; 8:32; Eph. 1:7; 3:5) Let it therefore be every day your joyful thanksgiving. `Bless the Lord, O my soul, who forgiveth all mine iniquities.' Then forgiveness becomes the power of a new life: `He who is forgiven much, loves much.' The forgiveness of sins, received anew in living faith every day, is a bond that binds anew to Jesus and His service. (John 13:14,15; Rom. 7:1; 1 Cor. 6:20; Eph. 5:25,26; Tit. 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:17,18)

Then the forgiveness of former sins always gives courage to go immediately anew with every new sin and trustfully to take forgiveness. (Ex. 34:6,7; Matt. 28:21; Luke 1:77,78) Look, however, to one thing: the certitude of forgiveness must not be a matter of memory or understanding, but the fruit of life -- living converse with the forgiving Father, with Jesus in whom we have forgiveness. (Eph. 2:13,18; Phil. 3:9; Col. 1:21,22) It is not enough to know that I once received forgiveness: my life in the love of God, my living intercourse with Jesus by faith -- this makes the forgiveness of sin again always new and powerful -- the joy and the life of my soul.

> Lord God, this is the wonder of Thy grace, that Thou art a forgiving God. Teach me every day to know in this anew the glory of Thy love. Let the Holy Spirit every day seal forgiveness to me as a blessing, everlasting, ever-fresh, living, and powerful. And let my life be as a song of thanksgiving. `Bless the Lord, O my soul, who forgiveth all thine iniquities.' Amen.

1. At bottom, forgiveness is one with justification. Forgiveness is the word that looks more to the relation of God as Father. Justification looks more to His acquittal as Judge. Forgiveness is a word that is more easily understood by the young Christian. But he must also endeavour to understand the word justification, and to obtain part in all that the Scripture teaches about it.

2. About justification we must understand --

That man in himself is wholly unrighteous.

That he cannot be justified by works, that is, pronounced righteous before the judgment-seat of God.

That Jesus Christ has brought in a righteousness in our place. His obedience is our righteousness.

That we through faith receive Him, are united with Him; and then are pronounced righteous before God.

That we through faith have the certitude of this, and, as justified, draw near before God.

That union with Jesus is a life by which we are not only pronounced righteous, but are really righteous and act righteously.

3. Let the certitude of your part in justification, in the full forgiveness of your sins, and in full restoration to the love of God, be every day your confidence in drawing near to God.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XIII. THE CLEANSING OF SIN

`If we walk in the light, the blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' -- 1 John 1:7,9

The same God that forgives sin also cleanses from it. Not less than forgiveness is cleansing a promise of God, and therefore a matter of faith. As it is indispensable, as it is impossible for man, so is cleansing as well as forgiveness certain to be obtained from God.

And what now is this cleansing? The word comes from the Old Testament. While forgiveness was a sentence of acquittal passed on the sinner, cleansing was something that happened to him and in him. Forgiveness came to him through the word: in the case of cleansing, something was done to him that he could experience. (Lev. 8:13; 14:7,8; Num. 19:12, 31:23,24; 2 Sam. 22:21,25; 2 Chron. 5:10; Neh. 13:30; 28:21,25; Ps. 21:4; Mal. 3:3) Consequently with us also cleansing is the inner revelation of the power of God whereby we are liberated from unrighteousness, from the pollution and the working of sin. Through cleansing we obtain the blessing of a pure heart; a heart in which the Spirit can complete His operations with a view to sanctifying us, and revealing God within us. (Ps 51:12; 73:1; Matt. 5:8; 1 Tim 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Pet. 1:22)

Cleansing is through the blood. Forgiveness and cleansing are both through the blood. The blood breaks the power that sin has in heaven to condemn us. The blood thereby also breaks the power of sin in the heart to hold us captive. The blood has a ceaseless operation in heaven from moment to moment. The blood has likewise a ceaseless operation in our heart, to purify, to keep pure the heart into which sin always seeks to penetrate from the flesh. The blood cleanses the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God. The marvelous power that the blood has in heaven, it has also in the heart. (John 13:10,11; Heb. 9:14; 10:22; 1 John 1:7)

Cleansing is also through the word, for the word testifies of the blood and of the power of God. (John 14:3) Hence also cleansing is through faith. It is a divine and effectual cleansing, but it must also be received in faith ere it can be experienced and felt. I believe that I am cleansed with a divine cleansing, even while I still perceive sin in the flesh; through faith in this blessing, cleansing itself shall be my daily experience.

Cleansing is ascribed sometimes to God or the Lord Jesus; sometimes to man. (Ps. 51:3; Ezek. 30:25; John 13:2; 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Tim. 5:22; 2 Tim 2:21; Jas. 4:8; 1 John 3:3) That is because God cleanses us by making us active in our own cleansing. Through the blood the lust that leads to sin is mortified, the certitude of power against it is awakened, and the desire and the will are thus made alive. Happy is he that understands this. He is protected against useless endeavours after self-purification in his own strength, for he knows God alone can do it. He is protected against discouragement, for he knows God will certainly do it.

What we have now accordingly to lay the chief stress upon is found in two things, the desire and the reception of cleansing. The desire must be strong for a real purification. Forgiveness must be only the gateway or beginning of a holy life. I have several times remarked that the secret of progress in the service of God is a strong yearning to become free from every sin, a hunger and thirst after righteousness. (Ps. 19:13; Matt. 5:6) Blessed are such as thus yearn. They shall understand and receive the promise of a cleansing through God.

They learn also what it is to do this in faith. Through faith they know that an unseen, spiritual, heavenly, but very real cleansing through the blood is wrought in them by God Himself.

Beloved child of God, you remember how we have seen that it was to cleanse us that Jesus gave Himself. (Eph. 5:26; Tit. 2:14) Let Him, let God the Lord, cleanse you. Having these promises of a divine cleansing,

cleanse yourselves. Believe that every sin, when it is forgiven you, is also cleansed away. It shall be to you according to your faith. Let your faith in God, in the word, in the blood, in your Jesus increase continually: `God is faithful and righteous to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'

> Lord Go, I thank Thee for these promises. Thou givest not only forgiveness, but also cleansing. As surely as forgiveness comes first, does cleansing follow for every one that desires it and believes. Lord, let Thy word penetrate my heart, and let a divine cleansing from every sin that is forgiven me be the stable expectation of my soul. Beloved Saviour, let the glorious, ceaseless cleansing of Thy blood through Thy Spirit in me be made known to me and shared by me every moment. Amen.

1. What is the connection between cleansing by God and cleansing by man himself?
2. What, according to 1 John 1:9, are the two things that must precede cleansing?
3. Is cleansing, as well as forgiveness, the work of God in us? If this is the case, of what inexpressible importance is it to trust God for it. To believe that God gives me a divine cleansing in the blood when He forgives me, is the way to become partaker of it.
4. What, according to Scripture, are the evidence of a pure heart?
5. What are `clean hands'? (Ps. 24)

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XIV. HOLINESS

`Like as He which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living: because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy.' -- 1 Pet. 1:15,16
`But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us from God, sanctification.' -- 1 Cor. 1:30
`God chose you from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.' -- 2 Thess. 2:13

Not only salvation, but holiness -- salvation in holiness: for this end has God chosen and called us. Not only safe in Christ, but holy in Christ, must the goal of the young Christian be. Safety and salvation are in the long run found only in holiness. The Christian who thinks that his salvation consists merely in safety and not in holiness, will find himself deceived. Young Christian, listen to the word of God: Be holy.

And wherefore must I be holy? Because He who called you is holy, and summons you to fellowship and conformity with Himself. How should any one be saved in God, when he has not the same disposition as God? (Ex. 19:6; Lev. 11:44; 19:2; 20:6,7)

God's holiness is His highest glory. In His holiness His righteousness and love are united. His holiness is the flaming fire of His zeal against all that is sin, whereby He keeps Himself free from sin, and in love makes others also free from it. It is as the Holy One of Israel that He is the Redeemer, and that He dwells in the midst of His people. (Ex. 25:11; Isa. 2:6; 12:14; 43:15; 49:7; 57:15; Hos. 11:9) Redemption is given to bring us to Himself and to the fellowship of His holiness. We cannot possibly have part in the love and salvation of God if we are not holy as He is holy. (Isa. 10:18; Heb. 12:14) Young Christians, be holy.

And what is this holiness that I must have? Answer: Of God are ye in Christ, who of God is made unto you sanctification. Christ is your sanctification; the life of Christ in you is your holiness. (1 Cor. 1:3; Eph. 5:27) In Christ you are sanctified; you are holy. In Christ you must still be sanctified; the glory of Christ must penetrate your whole life.

Holiness is more than purity. In Scripture we see that cleansing precedes holiness. (2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 5:26,27; 2 Tim. 2:21) Cleansing is the taking away of that which is wrong; liberation from sin. Holiness is the filling with that which is good, divine, with the disposition of Jesus. Conformity to Him -- this is holiness: separation from the spirit of the world; the being filled with the presence of the Holy God -- this is holiness. The tabernacle was holy because God dwelt there; we are holy, as God's temple, after we have the indwelling of God. Christ's life in us is our holiness. (Ex. 29:43,45; 1 Cor. 1:2; 3:16,17; 6:19)

And how do we become holy? By the sanctification of the Spirit. The Spirit of God is named the Holy Spirit, because He makes us holy. He reveals and glorifies Christ in us. Through Him Christ dwells in us, and His holy power works in us. Through this Holy Spirit the workings of the flesh are mortified, and God works in us both the will and the accomplishment. (Rom. 1:4; 8:2,13; 1 Pet. 1:2)

And what is now the work that we have to do to receive this holiness of Christ through the Holy Spirit? `God chose you to salvation, in sanctification of the Spirit *and belief of the truth.'* (2 Thess. 2:13) The holiness of Christ becomes ours through faith. There must naturally first be the desire to become holy. We must cleanse ourselves from all pollutions of flesh and spirit by confessing them, giving them up to God, and having them cleansed away in the blood. Then, first, can we perfect holiness. (2 Cor. 7:1). Then, in belief of the truth that Christ Himself is our sanctification, we have to take and receive from Him what is prepared in His fulness for us. (John 1:14,16; 1

Cor. 2:9,10) We must be deeply convinced that Christ is wholly and alone our sanctification as He is our justification, and that He will actually and powerfully work in us that which is well-pleasing to God. In this faith we must know that we have sufficient power for holiness, and that our work is to receive this power from Him by faith every day. (Gal. 2:21; Eph. 2:10; Phil. 2:13; 4:13) He gives His Spirit, the Holy Spirit, in us; the Spirit communicates the holy life of Jesus to us.

Young Christian, the Three-One God is the Thrice-Holy. (Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8; 15:3,4) And this Three-One God is the God that sanctifies you: the Father, by giving Jesus to you, and confirming you in Jesus; the Son, by Himself becoming your sanctification and giving you the Spirit; the Spirit, by revealing the Son in you, preparing you as a temple for the indwelling of God, and making the Son dwell in you. O, be holy, for God is holy.

> Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, what thanks shall I render to Thess for the gift of Thy Son as my sanctification, and that I am sanctified in Him. And what thanks for the Spirit of sanctification to dwell in me, and transplant the holiness of Jesus into me. Lord, give me to understand this aright, and to long for the experience of it. Amen.

1. What is the distinction betwixt forgiveness and cleansing, and betwixt cleansing and holiness?
2. What made the temple a sanctuary? The indwelling of God. What makes us holy? Nothing less than this: the indwelling of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit. Obedience and purity are the way to holiness; holiness itself is something higher.
3. In Isa. 52:17, there is a description of the man who will become holy. It is he who, in poverty of spirit, acknowledges that, even when he is living as a righteous man, he has nothing, and looks to God to come and dwell in Him.
4. No one is holy but the Lord. You have as much of holiness as you have of God in you.
5. The word `holy' is one of the deepest words in the Bible, the deepest mystery of the Godhead. Do you desire to understand something of it, and to obtain part in it? Then take these two thoughts, `I am holy.' `Be ye holy,' and carry them in your heart as a seed of God that has life.
6. What is the connection betwixt the perseverance of the saints and perseverance in holiness?

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XV. RIGHTEOUSNESS

`He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' -- Micah 6:8

`Present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness. Even so now present your members as servants to righteousness unto sanctification.' -- Rom. 6:13,18,19

The word of Micah teaches us that the fruit of the salvation of God is seen chiefly in three things. The new life must be characterized, in my relation to God and His will, by righteousness and doing right; in my relation to my neighbour, by love and beneficence; in relation to myself, by humility and lowliness. For the present, we meditate on righteousness.

Scripture teaches us that no man is righteous before God, or has any righteousness that can stand before God; (Ps. 14:3; 143:2; Rom. 3:10,20) that man receives the rightness or righteousness of Christ for nothing; and that by this righteousness, which is received in faith, he is then justified before God, (Rom. 3:22,24: 10:3,10; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9) he is right with God. This righteous sentence of God is something effectual, whereby the life of righteousness is implanted in man, and he learns to live as a righteous man, and to do righteousness. (Rom. 5:17,18; 6:13,18,19; 8:3; Tit. 1:8; 2:12; 1 John 2:29; 3:9,10) Being right with God is followed by doing right. `The righteous shall live by faith' a righteous life.

It is to be feared that this is not always understood. One thinks sometimes more of justification than of righteousness in life and walk. To understand the will and the thoughts of God here, let us trace what Scripture teaches us on this point. We shall be persuaded that the man who is clothed with a divine righteousness before God must also walk before God and man in a divine righteousness.

Consider how, in the word, the servants of God are praised as righteous; (Gen. 6:9; 7:1; Matt. 1:19; Luke 1:6; 2:25; 2 Pet. 2:7) how the favour and blessing of God are pronounced upon the righteous; (Ps. 1:6; 5:13, 14:5; 34:16,20; 37:17,39; 92:13; 97:11; 144:8) how the righteous are called to confidence, to joy. (Ps. 32:11; 33:1; 58:11; 64:11; 68:4; 97:12) See this especially in the Book of Psalms. See how in Proverbs, although you should take but one chapter only, all blessing is pronounced upon the righteous. (Prov. 10:3,6,7,11,16,20,21,24,25,28,30,31,32 See how everywhere men are divided into two classes, the righteous and the godless. (Eccles 3:17; Isa. 3:10; Ezek. 3:18,20; 18:21,23; 33:12; Mal. 3:18; Matt. 5:45; 12:49; 25:46) See how, in the New Testament, the Lord Jesus demands this righteousness; (Matt. 5:6,20; 6:33) how Paul, who announces most the doctrine of justification by faith alone, insists that this is the aim of justification, to form righteous men, who do right. Rom. 3:31; 6:13,22; 7:4,6; 8:4; 2 Cor. 9:9,10; Phil 1:11; 1 Tim. 6:11) See how John names righteousness along with love as the two indispensable marks of the children of God. (1 John 2:4,11,29; 3:10; 5:2) When you put all these facts together, it must be very evident to you that a true Christian is a man who does righteousness in all things, even as God is righteous.

And what this righteousness is, Scripture will also teach you. It is a life in accordance with the commands of God, in all their breadth and height. The righteous man does what is right in the eyes of the Lord. (Ps. 119:166,168; Luke 1:6,75; 1 Thess. 2:10) He takes not the rules of human action; he asks not what man considers lawful. As a man who stands right with God, who walks uprightly with God, he dreads above all things even the least unrighteousness. He is afraid, above all, of being partial to himself, of doing any wrong to his neighbour for the sake of his own advantage. In great and little things alike, he takes the Scriptures as his measure and line. As

the ally of God, he knows that the way of righteousness is the way of blessing, and life, and joy.

Consider, further, the promises of blessing and joy which God has for the righteous, and then live as one who, in friendship with God, and clothed with the righteousness of His Son through faith, has no alternative but to do righteousness.

> O Lord, who hast said, `There is no God else beside Me: a just God and a Saviour,' Thou art my God. It is as a righteous God that Thou are my Saviour, and hast redeemed me in Thy Son. As a righteous God Thou makest me also righteous, and sayest to me that the righteous shall live by faith. O Lord, let the new life in me be the life of faith, the life of a righteous man. Amen.

1. Observe the connection between the doing of righteousness and sanctification in Rom. 6:19,22; `Present your members as servants to righteousness unto sanctification.' `Having become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification.' The doing of righteousness, righteousness in conduct and action, is the way to holiness. Obedience is the way to become filled with the Holy Ghost. And the indwelling of God through the Spirit -- this is holiness.

2. `Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. It was when the Lord Jesus had spoken that word that He was baptized with the Spirit. Let us set aside every temptation not to walk in full obedience towards God, even as He did, and we too shall be filled with the Spirit. `Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness.'

3. Take pains to set before yourselves the image of a man who so walks that the name of `righteous; is involuntarily given to him. Think of his uprightness, his conscientious care to cause no one to suffer the least injury, his holy fear and carefulness to transgress none of the commands of the Lord -- righteous, and walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless; and then say to the Lord that you should so live.

4. You understand now the great word, `The righteous shall live by faith.' By faith the godless is justified, and becomes a righteous man; by faith he lives as a righteous man.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XVI. LOVE

`A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.' -- John 13:34,35
`Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: love therefore is the fulfilling of the law.' -- Rom. 13:10
`Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. If we love one another, God abideth in us, and His love is perfected in us.' -- 1 John 4:11,12

In the word of Micah, in the previous section, righteousness was the first thing, to love mercy the second, that God demands. Righteousness stood more in the foreground in the Old Testament: it is in the New Testament that it is first seen that love is supreme. Utterances to this effect are not difficult to find. It is in the advent of Jesus that the love of God is first revealed; that the new, the eternal life, is first given; that we become children of the Father, and brethren of one another. On this ground the Lord can then, for the first time, speak of the New Commandment -- the commandment of brotherly love. Righteousness is required not less in the New Testament than in the Old. (Matt 5:6,17,20; 6:33) Yet the burden of the New Testament is, that power has been given us for a love that in early days was impossible. (Rom. 5:5; Gal. 5:22; 1 Thess. 4:9; 1 John 4:11; 13:34)

Let every Christian take it deeply to heart, that in the first and the great commandment, the new commandment given by Jesus at His departure, the peculiar characteristic of a disciple of Jesus is brotherly love. And let him with his whole heart yield himself to Him, to obey that command. For the right exercise of this brotherly love, one must take heed to more than one thing.

Love to the brethren arises from the love of the Father. By the Holy Spirit, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, the wonderful love of the Father is unveiled to us, so that His love becomes the life and the joy of our soul. Out of this fountain of the love of God to us springs our love to Him. (Rom. 5:5; 1 John 4:19) And our love to Him works naturally love to the brethren. (Eph. 4:2,6; 5:1,2; 1 John 3:1; 4:7,20; 5:1) Do not attempt then to fulfil the commandment of brotherly love of yourselves: you are not in a position to do this. But believe that the Holy Spirit, who is in you to make known the love of God to you, also certainly enables you to yield this love. Never say: I feel no love; I do not feel as if I can forgive this man. Feeling is not the rule of your duty, but the command, and the faith that God gives power to obey the command. In obedience to the Father, with the choice of your will, and in faith that the Holy Spirit gives you power, begin to say: I will love him; I do love him. The feeling will follow the faith. Grace gives power for all that the Father asks of you. (Matt. 5:44,45; Gal 2:20; 1 Thess. 3:12,13; 5:24; Phil. 4:13; 1 Pet. 1:22)

Brotherly love has its measure and rule in the love of Jesus. `This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.' (Luke 22:26,27; John 13:14,15,34; Col. 2:13) The eternal life that works in us is the life of Jesus; it knows no other law than what we see in Him; it works with power in us what it wrought in Him. Jesus Himself lives in us and loves in and through us: we must believe in the power of this love in us, and in that faith love as He loved. O, do believe that this is true salvation, to love even as Jesus loves.

Brotherly love must be in deed and in truth. (Matt. 12:50; 25:40; Rom. 13:10; 1 Cor. 7:19; Gal. 5:6; Jas. 2:15,16; 1 John 3:16-18) It is not mere feeling: faith working by love is what has power in Christ. It manifests itself in all the dispositions that are enumerated in the word of God. Contemplate its glorious image in 1 Cor. 13:4-7. Mark all the glorious encouragements to gentleness, to longsuffering, to mercy. (Gal. 5:22; Eph. 4:2,32; Phil. 2:2,3; Col. 3:12; 2 Thess. 1:3) In all your conduct, let it be seen that the love of Christ dwells in you. Let your

love be a helpful, self-sacrificing love, like that of Jesus. Hold all children of God, however sinful or perverse they may be, fervently dear. Let love to them teach you to love all men. (Luke 6:32,35; 1 Pet. 1:22; 2 Pet. 1:7) Let your household, and the Church, and the world, see in you one with whom `love is greatest;' one in whom the love of God has a full dwelling, a free working.

Christian, God is love. Jesus is the gift of this love, to bring love to you, to transplant you into that life of godlike love. Live in that faith, and you shall not complain that you have no power to love: the love of the Spirit shall be your power and your life.

> Beloved Saviour, I discern more clearly that the whole of the new life is a life in love. Thou Thyself art the Son of God's love, the gift of His love, come to introduce us into His love, and give us a dwelling there. And the Holy Spirit is given to shed abroad the love of God in our hearts, to open a spring out of which shall stream love to Thee, and to the brethren, and to all mankind. Lord, here am I, one redeemed by love, to love for it, and in its might to love all. Amen.

1. Those who reject the word of God sometimes say that it is of no moment what we believe, if we but have love, and so they are for making love the one condition of salvation. In their zeal against this view, the orthodox party have sometimes presented faith in justification, as if love were not of so much importance. This is likely to be very dangerous. God is love. His Son is the gift, the bringer, of His love to us. The Spirit sheds abroad the love of God in the heart. The New Life is a life in love. Love is the greatest thing. Let it be the chief element in our life: true love, that, namely, which is known in the keeping of God's commandments. (See 1 John 3:10,23,24; 5:2)

2. Do not wonder that I have said to you that you must love, although you do not feel the least love. Not the feeling, but the will is your power: it is not in your feeling, but in faith, that the Spirit in you is the power of your will to work in you all that the Father bids you. Therefore, although you feel absolutely no love to your enemy, say in the obedience of faith: Father, I love him; in faith in the hidden working of the Spirit in my heart, I do love him.

3. Pray, think not that this is love, if you wish no evil to any one, or if you should be willing to help, if he were in need. No: love is much more: love is *love*. Love is the disposition with which God addressed you when you were His enemy, and afterwards ran to you with tender longing to bless you.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XVII. HUMILITY

`And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' -- Micah 6:8
`Learn of me that I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.' -- Matt. 11:29

One of the most dangerous enemies against which the young Christian must watch, is pride or self-exaltation. There is no sin that works more cunningly and more hiddenly. It knows how to penetrate into everything, even into our service for God, our prayers -- yea, even into our humility: there is nothing so small in the earthly life, nothing so holy in the spiritual life, that self-exaltation does not know to extract its nutriment out of. (2 Chron. 26:5,16; 32:26,31; Isa. 65:5; Jer. 7:4; 2 Cor. 12:7) The Christian must therefore be on his guard against it, must listen to what Scripture teaches about it, and about the lowliness whereby it is driven out.

Man was created to have part in the glory of God. He obtains this by surrendering himself to the glorification of God. The more he seeks that the glory of God only shall be seen in him, the more does this glory rest upon himself. (Isa. 43:7,21; John 12:28; 13:31,32; 27:1,4,5; 1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Thess. 1:11,12) The more he forgets and loses himself, desiring to be nothing, that God may be all and be alone glorified, the more happy shall he be.

By sin this design has been thwarted: man seeks himself and his own will. (Rom. 1:21,23) Grace has come to restore what sin has corrupted, and to bring man to glory by the pathway of dying unto himself and living solely for the glory of God. This is the humility or lowliness of which Jesus is the exemplar: He took no thought for Himself, He have himself over wholly to glorify the Father (John 8:50 Phil. 2:7)

He who would be freed from self-exaltation must not think to obtain this by striving against its mere workings. No: pride must be driven out and kept out by humility. The Spirit of life in Christ, the Spirit of His lowliness, will work in us true lowliness. (Rom. 8:2; Phil. 2:5)

The means that He will chiefly use for this end is the word. It is by the word that we are cleansed from sin; it is by the word that we are sanctified and filled with the love of God.

Observe what the word says about this point. It speaks of God's aversion to pride, and the punishment that comes upon it. (Ps. 31:24; Prov. 26:5; Matt. 23:12; Luke 1:51; Jas. 4:5; 1 Pet. 5:5) It gives the most glorious promises to the lowly. (Ps. 34:19; Prov. 11:2; Isa. 57: 15; Luke 9:48; 14:11; 18:14) In well-nigh every Epistle, humility is commended to Christians as one of the first virtues. (Rom. 12:3,16; 1 Cor. 13:4; Gal. 5:22,26; Eph. 4:2; Phil. 2:3; Col. 2:13) It is the feature in the image of Jesus which He seeks chiefly to impress on His disciples. His whole incarnation and redemption has its roots in His humiliation. (Matt. 20:26,28; Luke 22:27; John 13:14,15; Phil. 2:7,8)

Take singly some of these words of God from time to time and lay them up in your heart. The tree of life yields many different kinds of seed -- the seed also of the heavenly plant, lowliness. The seeds are the words of God. Carry them in your heart: they shall shoot up and yield fruit. (1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 4:12; Jas. 1:21)

Consider, moreover, how lovely, how becoming, how well-pleasing to God, lowliness is. As man, created for the honour of God, you find it befitting you. (Gen. 1:27; 1 Cor. 11:7) As a sinner, deeply unworthy, you have nothing more to urge against it. (Job 40:6; Isa. 6:5; Luke 5:8) As a redeemed soul, who knows that only through the death of the natural *I* does the way to the new life lie, you find it indispensable. (Rom. 7:18; 1 Cor. 25:9,10; Gal. 2:20)

But here, as everywhere in the life of grace, let faith be the chief thing. Believe in the power of the eternal life

that works in you. Believe in the power of Jesus, who is your life. Believe in the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells in you. Attempt not to hide your pride, or to forget it, or to root it out yourself. Confess this sin, with every working of it that you trace, in the sure confidence that the blood cleanses, that the Spirit sanctifies. Learn of Jesus that He is meek and lowly in heart. Consider that He is your life, with all that He has. Believe that He gives His humility to you. The word: `Do it to the Lord Jesus,' means, `Be clothed with the Lord Jesus.' Be clothed with humility, in order that you may be clothed with Jesus. It is Christ in you that shall fill you with humility.

> Blessed Lord Jesus, there never was any one amongst the children of men so high, so holy, so glorious as Thou. And never was there any one who was so lowly and ready to deny himself as the servant of all. O Lord, when shall we learn that lowliness is the grace by which man can be most closely conformed to the divine glory? O teach me this. Amen.

1. Take heed that you do nothing to feed pride on the part of others. Take heed that you do not suffer others to feed your pride. Take heed, above all, that you do nothing yourself to feed your pride. Let God alone always and in all things obtain the honour. Endeavour to observe all that is good in His children, and to thank Him heartily for it. Thank Him for all that helps you to hold yourself in small esteem, whether it be sent through friend or foe. Resolve, especially, never on any account to be eagerly bent on your own honour, when this is not accorded to you as it ought to be. Commit this to the Father: take heed only to His honour.

2. By no means suppose that faint-heartedness or doubting is lowliness. Deep humility and strong faith go together. The centurion who said: `I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof,' and the woman who said: `Yea, Lord, yet even the dogs eat of the crumbs' -- these two were the most humble and the most trustful that the Lord found (see Matt. 8:10; 15:28). The reason is this: the nearer we are to God, the less we are in ourselves, but the stronger we are in Him. The more I see of God, the less I become, the deeper is my confidence in Him. To become lowly, let God fill eye and heart. Where God is all, there is no time or place for man.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XVIII. STUMBLINGS

`In many things we all stumble.' -- Jas. 3:2

This word of God by James is the description of what man is, even the Christian, when he is not kept by grace. It serves to take away from us all hope in ourselves. (Rom. 7:14,23; Gal. 6:1) `Now unto Him that is able to guard you from stumbling ... be glory, majesty, dominion, and power ... forevermore' (Jude 24,25). This word of God by Jude points to Him who can keep from falling, and stirs up the soul to ascribe to Him the honour and the power. It serves to confirm our hope in God. (2 Cor. 1:9; 1 Thess. 5:24; 2 Thess. 2:16,17; 3:3) `Brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble' (2 Pet. 1:10). This word of God by Peter teaches us the way in which we can become partakers of the keeping of the Almighty: the confirmation of our election by God in a godlike walk (see verses. 4,8,11). It serves to lead us into diligence and conscientious watchfulness. (Matt. 26:41; Luke 12:35; 1 Pet. 1:13; 5:8-10)

For the young Christian, it is often a difficult question what he ought to think of his stumblings. On this point, he ought especially to be on his guard against two errors. Some become dispirited when they stumble: they think that their surrender was not sincere, and lose their confidence towards God. (Heb. 3:6,14; 10:35) Others again take it too lightly. They think that it cannot be otherwise: they concern themselves little with stumblings, and continue to live in them. (Rom. 6:1; Gal. 2:18; 3:3) Let us take these words of God to teach us what we ought to think of our stumblings. There are three lessons.

Let no stumblings discourage you. You are called to perfectness: yet this comes not at once: time and patience are needful for it. Therefore James says: `Let patience have its perfect work that ye may be perfect and entire. (Matt. 5:48; 2 Tim. 3:17; Heb. 13:20,21; Jas. 1:4; 1 Pet. 5:10) Think not that your surrender was not sincere; acknowledge only how weak you still are. Think not also that you must only continue stumbling: acknowledge only how strong your Saviour is.

Let stumbling rouse you to faith in the mighty keeper. It is because you have not relied on Him with a sufficient faith that you have stumbled. (Matt. 14:31; 17:20) Let stumbling drive you to Him. The first thing that you must do with a stumbling is: go with it to your Jesus. Tell it out to Him. (Ps. 38:18; 56:6; 1 John 1:9; 2:1) Confess it, and receive forgiveness. Confess it, and commit yourself with your weakness to Him, and reckon on Him to keep you. Sing continually the song: `To Him that is mighty to keep you, be the glory.'

And then, *let stumbling make you very prudent.* (Prov. 28:14; Phil. 2:12; 1 Pet. 1:17,18) By faith you shall strive and overcome. In the power of your keeper and the joy and security of His help, you shall have courage to watch. The firmer you make your election, the stronger the certitude that He has chosen you, and will not let you go, the more conscientious shall you become, to live in all things only for Him, in Him, through Him. (2 Chron 20:15; Ps. 18:30,37; 44:5,9; John 5:4,5; Rom. 11:20; 2 Cor. 1:24; Phil. 2:13) Doing this, the word of God says, you shall never stumble.

> Lord Jesus, a sinner who is ready to stumble every moment would give honour to Thee, who art mighty to keep from stumbling: Thine is the might and the power: I take Thee as my keeper. I look to Thy love which has chosen me, and wait for the fulfilment of Thy word: `Ye shall never

stumble.' Amen.

1. Let your thoughts about what the grace of God can do for you, be taken only from the word of God. Our natural expectations -- that we must just always be stumbling -- are wrong. They are strengthened by more than one thing. There is secret unwillingness to surrender everything. There is the example of so many sluggish Christians. There is the unbelief that cannot quite understand that God will really keep us. There is the experience of so many disappointments, when we have striven in our own power.

2. Let no stumbling be tolerated, for the reason that it is trifling.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XIX. JESUS THE KEEPER

`The Lord is Thy keeper: ... The Lord shall keep thee from all evil; ... He shall keep thy soul.' -- Ps. 121:4,7
`I know Him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to guard that which I have committed unto Him against that day.' -- 2 Tim. 1:12

For young disciples of Christ who are still weak, there is no lesson that is more necessary than this, that the Lord has not only received them, but that He will also keep them. (Gen. 28:15; Deut. 7:9; 32:10; Ps. 27:8; 89:33,34; Rom. 12:2,29) The lovely name, `the Lord Thy keeper,' must for this end be carried in the heart, until the assurance of an Almighty keeping becomes as strong with us as it was with Paul, when he spake that glorious word: `I know Him in whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to guard that which I have committed unto Him against that day.' Come and learn this lesson from him.

Learn from his *to deposit your pledge with Jesus.* Paul had surrendered himself, body and soul, to the Lord Jesus: that was His pledge which he had deposited with the Lord. You have also surrendered yourselves to the Lord, but perhaps not with the clear understanding that it is in order to be *kept* every day. Do this now daily. Deposit your soul with Jesus as a costly pledge that He will keep secure. Do this same thing with every part of your life. Is there something that you cannot rightly hold -- your heart, because it is too worldly; (Ps. 31:6; Jer. 31:33) your tongue, because it is too idle; (Ps. 51:17; 141:3) your temper, because it is too passionate; (Ps. 119:165; Jer. 26:3,4; John 14:27; Phil. 4:6,7; 2 Thess. 3:16) your calling to confess the Lord, because you are too weak? (Isa. 50:7; Jer. 1:9; Matt. 10:19,20; Luke 26:15) Learn, then, to deposit it as a pledge for keeping with Jesus, in order that He may fulfil in you the promise of God about it. You often pray and strive too much in vain against a sin: it is because, although this is done with God's help, you would be the person who would overcome. No: entrust the matter wholly to Jesus: `the battle is not yours, but God's. (Ex. 14:14; Deut. 3:22; 20:4 2 Chron. 20:15) Leave it in His hands: believe in Him to do it for you: `This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even your faith.' (Matt. 9:23; 1 John 5:3,4) But you must first place it wholly out of your hands in His.

Learn from Paul to set your confidence *only on the power of Jesus.* I am persuaded that *He is able* to keep my pledge. You have an almighty Jesus to keep you. Faith keeps itself occupied only with His omnipotence. (Gen. 17:1; 18:14; Jer. 32:17,27; Matt. 8:27; 28:18; Luke 1:37,49; 18:27; Rom. 4:21; Heb. 11:18) Let your faith especially be strengthened in what God is able to do for you. (Rom. 4:21; 14:4; 2 Cor. 9:8; 2 Tim. 1:12) Expect with certainty from Him that He will do for you great and glorious things, entirely above your own strength. See in the Holy Scriptures how constantly the power of God was the ground of the trust of His people. Take these words and hide them in your heart. Let the power of Jesus fill your soul. Ask only: `What is my Jesus able to do?' What you really trust Him with, He is able to keep. (John 13:1; 1 Cor. 1:8,9)

And learn also from Paul where he obtained the assurance that this power would keep his pledge: it was *in his knowledge of Jesus.* `I know Him whom I have believed:' therefore I am assured. (John 10:14,28; Gal. 2:20; 2 Tim. 4:18; 1 John 2:13,14) You can trust the power of Jesus, if you *know* that He is yours, if you hold converse with Him as your friend. Then you can say: `I know whom I have believed: I know that he holds my very dear: I know and am assured that He is able to keep my pledge.' So runs the way to the full assurance of faith: Deposit your pledge with Jesus; give yourselves wholly, give everything, into His hands; think much on His might, and reckon upon Him; and live with Him so that you may always know who He is in whom you have believed.

Young disciples of Christ, pray, receive this word: `The Lord is thy keeper.' For every weakness, every

temptation, learn to deposit your soul with Him as a pledge. You can reckon upon it, you can shout joyfully over it: `The Lord shall keep you from all evil. (Josh. 1:9; Ps. 23:4; Rom. 8:35,39)

> Holy Jesus, I take Thee as my keeper. Let Thy name, `The Lord thy keeper,' sound as a song in my heart the whole day. Teach me in every need to deposit my case as a pledge with Thee, and to be assured that Thou art able to keep it. Amen.

1. There was once a woman who for years long, and with much prayer, had striven against her temper, but could not obtain the victory. On a certain day she resolved not to come out of her room until by earnest prayer she had the power to overcome. She went out in the opinion that she should succeed. Scarcely had she been in the household, when something gave her offense and caused her to be angry. She was deeply ashamed, burst into tears, and hastened back to her room. A daughter, who understood the way of faith better than she, went to her and said, `Mother, I have observed your conflict: may I tell you what I think the hindrance is?' `Yes, my child,' `Mother, you struggle against temper, and pray that the Lord may *help* you to overcome. This is wrong. The Lord must do it alone. You must give temper wholly into His hands: then He takes it wholly, and He keeps you.' The mother could not at first understand this, but later it was made plain to her. And she enjoyed the blessedness of the life in which Jesus keeps us, and we by faith have the victory. Do you understand this?

2. `The Lord must help me to overcome sin:' the expression is altogether outside of the New Testament. The grace of God in the soul does not become a help to us. He will do everything: `The Spirit has made me free from the law of sin.'

3. When you surrender anything to the Lord for keeping, take heed to two things: that you give it wholly into His hands; and that you have it there. Let Him have it wholly: He will carry out your case gloriously.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XX. POWER AND WEAKNESS

`He hath said unto me, My power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore will I glory in my weaknesses, that the strength of Christ may rest upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses: for when I am weak, then am I strong.' -- 2 Cor. 12:9,10

There is almost no word that is so imperfectly understood in the Christian life as the word *weakness*. Sin and shortcoming, sluggishness and disobedience, are set to the account of our weakness. With this appeal to weakness, the true feeling of guilt and the sincere endeavour after progress are impossible. How, pray, can I be guilty, when I do not do what it is not in my power to do? The Father cannot demand of His child what He can certainly do independently. That, indeed, was done by the law under the Old Covenant; but that the Father, under the New Covenant, does not do. He requires of us nothing more than what He has prepared for us power to do in His Holy Spirit. The new life is a life in the power of Christ through the Spirit.

The error of this mode of thinking is that people estimate their weakness, not too highly, but too meanly. They would still do something by the exercise of all their powers, and with the help of God. They know not that they must be nothing before God. (Rom. 4:4,5; 11:6; 1 Cor. 1:27,28) You think that you have still a little strength, and that the Father must help you by adding something of His own power to your feeble energy. This thought is wrong. Your weakness appears in the fact that you *can do nothing*. It is better to speak of utter inability -- that is what the Scriptures understand by the word `weakness.' `Apart from me ye can do nothing.' `In us is no power.' (2 Chron. 16:9; 20:12; John 5:19; 15:5; 2 Cor. 1:9)

Whenever the young Christian acknowledges and assents to this his weakness, then he learns to understand the secret of the power of Jesus. He then sees that he is not to wait and pray to become stronger, to feel stronger. No: in his inability, he is to have the power of Jesus. By faith he is to receive it; he is to reckon that it is for him, and that Jesus Himself will work in and by him. (John 15:5; 1 Cor 1:24; 15:10; Eph. 1:18,19; Col. 1:11) It then becomes clear to him what the Lord means when He says, `My power is made perfect in your weakness.' He knows to return the answer, `When I am weak, then am I -- yea, then am I -- strong.' Yea, the weaker I am, the stronger I become. And he learns to sing with Paul, `I shall glory in my weaknesses.' `I take pleasure in weaknesses.' `We rejoice when we are weak.' (2 Cor. 11:30; 12:9,11; 13:4,9)

It is wonderful how glorious that life of faith becomes for him who is content to have nothing, or feel nothing, in himself, and always to live on the power of his Lord. He learns to understand what a joyful thing it is to know God as his strength. `The Lord is my strength and song.' (Ps. 89:18; 118:14; Jer. 12:2) He lives in what the Psalms so often express: `I love Thee, O Lord, my strength;' `I will sing of Thy strength: unto Thee, O my strength, will I sing praises.' (Ps. 18:2; 28:7,8; 31:5; 43:2; 46:2; 59:17,18; 62:8; 81:2) He understands what is meant when a psalm says, `Give strength to the Lord: the Lord will give strength to His people;' and when another says, `Give strength to God: the God of Israel, He giveth strength and power to His people.' (Ps. 29:1,11; 68:35,36) When we give or ascribe all the power to God, then He gives it to us again.

"I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the Evil One." The Christian is strong in his Lord: (Ps. 71:16; 1 John 2:14) not sometimes strong and sometimes weak, but always weak, and therefore always strong. He has merely to know and use his strength trustfully. To be strong is a command, a behest that must be obeyed. On obedience there comes more strength. `Be strong ... and He shall strengthen thine heart.' In faith the Christian must simply obey the command, `Be

strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.' (Ps. 27:14; 31:25; Isa. 40:31; Eph. 6:10)

> The God of the Lord Jesus, the Father of glory give unto us the spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Jesus, that we may know what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe. Amen.

1. So long as the Christian thinks of the service of God or of sanctification as something that is hard and *difficult*, he will make no progress in it. He must see that this very thing is for him *impossible*. Then he will cease still endeavouring to do something; he will surrender himself that Christ may work all in him. See these thoughts set forth in detail in Professor Hofmeyr's book, *Out of Darkness into Light: a Course of Instruction on Conversion, the Surrender of Faith, and Sanctification * (J.H. Rose, Cape Town),* chapter third and following of the third part.

2. The complaint about weakness is often nothing else than an apology for our idleness. There is power to be obtained in Christ for those who will take the pains to have it.

3. `Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.' Mind that. I must abide *in the Lord* and in the power of *His might*, then I become strong. To have His power I must have Himself. The strength is His, and continues His; the weakness continues mine. He, the Strong, works in me, the weak; I, the weak, abide by faith in Him, the Strong; so that I, in the self-same moment, know myself to be weak and strong.

4. Strength is for work. He who would be strong simply to be pious, will not be so. He who in his weakness begins to work for the Lord, shall become strong.

* Professor N.J. Hofmeyr is senior professor of the Theological College of the Dutch Reformed Church, Stellenbosch, Cape Colony. The volume referred to has been recently published in English under the title, *The Blessed Life: How to Find and Live It* (J. Nisbet & Co.), (*vide* P. 185). -- Translator

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XXI. THE LIFE OF FEELING

`We walk by faith, not by sight.' -- 2 Cor. 5:7
`Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.' -- John 20:29
`Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believedst, thou shouldest see the glory of God?' -- John 11:40

In connection with your conversion there was no greater hindrance in your way than feeling. You thought, perhaps for years, that you must experience something, must feel and perceive something in yourselves. It was to you as if it were too hazardous thus simply, and without some feeling, to believe in the word, and be sure that God had received you, and that your sins were forgiven. But at last you have had to acknowledge that the way of faith, without feeling, was the way of the word of God. And it has been to you the way of salvation. Through faith alone have you been saved, and your soul has found rest and peace. (John 3:36; Rom. 3;28; 4:5,16; 5:1)

In the further life of the Christian there is no temptation that is more persistent and more dangerous than this same feeling. The word `feeling' we do not find in Scripture, but what we call `feeling' the Scripture calls `seeing'. And it tells us without easing that not seeing, but believing, that believing right in opposition to what we see, gives salvation. `Abraham, not being weak in faith, considered not his own body'. * Faith adheres simply to what God says. The unbelief that would see shall not see; the faith that will not see, but has enough in God, shall see the glory of God. (2 Chron. 7:2; Ps. 2713; Isa. 7:9; Matt. 14:30,31; Luke 5:5) The man who seeks for feeling, and mourns about it, shall not find it; the man who cares not for it shall have it overflowing. `Whosoever would save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it.' Faith in the word becomes later on sealed with true feeling by the Holy Spirit. (John 12:25; Gal. 3:2,14; Eph. 1:13)

Child of God, learn to live by faith. Let it be fixed with you that faith is God's way to a blessed life. When there is no feeling of liveliness in prayer, when you feel cold and dull in the inner chamber, live by faith. Let your faith look upon Jesus as near, upon His power and faithfulness, and, though you have nothing to bring to Him, believe that He will give you all. Feeling always seeks something in itself; faith keeps itself occupied with what Jesus is. (Rom. 4:20,21; 2 Tim. 1:12; Heb. 9:5,6; Jas. 3:16; 6:16) When you read the word, and have no feeling of interest or blessing, read it yet again in faith. The word will work and bring blessing; `the word worketh in those that believe.' When you feel no love, believe in the love of Jesus, and say in faith that He knows that you still love Him. When you have no feeling of gladness, believe in the inexpressible joy that there is in Jesus for you. Faith is blessedness, and will give joy to those who are not concerned about the self-sufficiency that springs from joy, but about the glorification of God that springs from faith. (Rom. 15:13; Gal. 2:20; 1 Pet. 1:5,7,8) Jesus will surely fulfil His word: `Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.' `Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believedst, thou shouldest see the glory of God?'

Betwixt the life of feeling and the life of faith the Christian has to choose every day. Happy is he who, once for all, has made the firm choice, and every morning renews the choice, not to seek or listen for feeling, but only to walk by faith, according to the will of God. The faith that keeps itself occupied with the word, with what God has said, and, through the word, with God Himself and Jesus His Son, shall taste the blessedness of a life in God above. Feeling seeks and aims at itself; faith honours God, and shall be honoured by Him. Faith pleases God, and shall receive from Him the witness in the heart of the believer that he is acceptable to God.

> Lord God, the one, the only, thing that Thou desirest of Thy children is that they should trust Thee, and that they should always hold converse with Thee in that faith. Lord, let it be the one thing in which I seek my happiness, to honour and to please Thee by a faith that firmly holds Thee, the Invisible, and trusts Thee in all things. Amen.

1. There is indeed something marvelous in the new life. It is difficult to make it clear to the young Christian. The Spirit of God teaches him to understand it after he perseveres in grace. Jesus has laid the foundation of that life in the first word of the Sermon on the Mount: `Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven'; a feeling of deep poverty and of royal riches, of utter weakness and of kingly might, exist together in the soul. To have nothing in itself, to have all in Christ -- that is the secret of faith. And the true secret of faith is to bring this into exercise, and, in hours of barrenness and emptiness, still to know that we have all in Christ.

2. Forget not that the faith, of which God's word speaks so much, stands not only in opposition to *works*, but also in opposition to *feeling*, and therefore that for a pure life of faith you must cease to seek your salvation, not only in works, but also in faith. Therefore let faith always speak against feeling. When feeling says, *`In myself,* I am sinful; I am dark; I am weak; I am poor; I am sad;' let faith say. *`In Christ,* I am holy; I am light; I am strong; I am rich; I am joyful.'

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XXII. THE HOLY GHOST

`And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' -- Gal. 4:6

The great gift of the Father, through whom He obtained salvation and brought it near to us, is the Son. On the other hand, the great gift of the Son, whom He sends to us from the Father, to apply to us an inner and effectual salvation, is the Holy Spirit. (John 7:38; 14:16,26; Acts 1:4; 2:33; 1 Cor. 3:16) As the Son reveals and glorifies the Father, so the Spirit reveals and glorifies the Son. (John 15:26; 16:14,15; 1 Cor. 2:8,12; 12:3) The Spirit is in us to transfer to us the life and the salvation that are prepared in Jesus, and to make them wholly ours. (Job 14:17,21; Rom. 8:2; Eph. 3:17,19) Jesus who is in heaven is made present in us, dwells in us, by the Spirit. We have seen that in order to become partaker of Jesus there are always two things necessary: the knowledge of the sin that is in us, and of the redemption that is in Him. It is the Holy Spirit who continually promotes this double work in believers. He reproves and comforts, He convinces of sin and He glorifies Christ. (John 16:9,14)

The Spirit convinces of sin. He is the light and the fire of God, through whom sin is unveiled and consumed. He is `the Spirit of judgment and of burning,' by whom God purifies His people. (Isa. 4:4; Zech. 12:10,11; Matt. 3:11,12) To the anxious soul who complains that he does not feel his sin deeply enough, we must often say that there is no limit as to how deep his repentance must be. He must come daily just as he is; the deepest conviction often times comes after conversion. To the young convert we have simply to say: let the Spirit who is in you convince you always of sin. Sin, which formerly you knew but by name, He will make you hate. Sin, which you had not seen in the hidden depths of your heart, He will make you know, and with shame confess. Sin, of which you fancied that it was not with you, and which you had judged severely in others, He will point out to you in yourself. (Ps. 139:7,23; Isa. 10:17; Matt. 7:5; Rom. 14:4; 1 Cor. 2:10; 14:24,25) And He will teach you with repentance and self-condemnation to cast yourself upon grace as entirely sinful, in order to be thereby redeemed and purified from it.

Beloved brother, the Holy Spirit is in you as the light and fire of God to unveil and to consume sin. The temple of God is holy, and this temple you are. Let the Holy Spirit in you have full mastery to point out and expel sin. (Ps. 19:13; 139:23; Mic. 3:8; 1 Cor. 3:17; 2 Cor. 3:17; 5:16) After He makes you know sin, He will at every turn make you know Jesus as your life and your sanctification.

And then shall the Spirit who rebukes also comfort. He will glorify Jesus in you, will take what is in Jesus and make it known to you. He will give you knowledge concerning the power of Jesus' blood to cleanse, (1 John 1:7; 5:6) and the power of Jesus' indwelling to keep. (John 14:21,23; Eph. 3:17; 1 John 3:24; 4:13) He will make you see how literally, how completely, how certainly Jesus is with you every moment, to do Himself all his own Jesus-work in you. Yea, in the Holy Spirit, the living, almighty, and ever-present Jesus shall be your portion; you shall also know this, and have the full enjoyment of it. The Holy Spirit will teach you to bring all your sin and sinfulness to Jesus, and to know Jesus with His complete redemption from sin as your own. As the Spirit of sanctification, He will drive out sin in order that He may cause Jesus to dwell in you. (Rom. 1:4; 5:5; 8:2,13; 1 Pet. 1:2)

Beloved young Christian, take time to understand and to become filled with the truth: *the Holy Spirit is in you*. Review all the assurances of God's word that this is so. (Rom. 8:14,16; 1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 1:22; 6:16; Eph. 1:13) Pray, think not for a moment of living as a Christian without the indwelling of the Spirit. Take pains to have your

heart filled with the faith that the Spirit dwells in you, and will do His mighty work, for through faith the Spirit comes and works (Gal. 3:2,5,15; 5:5) Have a great reverence for the work of the Spirit in you. Seek Him every day to believe, to obey, to trust, and He will take and make known to you all that there is in Jesus. He will make Jesus very glorious to you and in you.

> O my Father, I thank Thee for this gift which Jesus sent me from Thee, the Father. I thank Thee that I am now the temple of Thy Spirit, and that He dwells in me. Lord, teach me to believe this with the whole heart, and to live in the world as one who knows that the Spirit of God is in him to lead him. Teach me to think with deep reverence and filial awe on this, that God is in me. Lord, in that faith I have the power to be holy. Holy Spirit, reveal to me all that sin is in me. Holy Spirit, reveal to me all that Jesus is in me. Amen.

1. The knowledge of the person and the work of the Holy Spirit is for us of just as much importance as the knowledge of the person and the work of Christ.

2. Concerning the Holy Spirit, we must endeavour especially to hold fast the truth that He is given as the *fruit* of the work of Jesus for us, that He is the *power* of the life of Jesus in us, and that through Him, *Jesus Himself,* with His full salvation, dwells in us.

3. In order to enjoy all this, we must be filled with the Spirit. This simply means, emptied of all else and full of Jesus. To deny ourselves, to take up the cross, to follow Jesus. Or rather, this is the way in which the Spirit leads us to His fulness. No one has the power to enter fully into the death of Jesus but he who is led by the Spirit. But He takes him that desires this by the hand and brings him.

4. As the whole of salvation, the whole of the new life is by faith, so is this also true of the gift and the working of the Holy Spirit. By faith, not by works -- not in feeling, do I receive Him, am I led by Him, am I filled with Him.

5. As clear and definite as my faith is in the work that Jesus only and alone finished for me, so clear and definite must faith be in the work that the Holy Spirit accomplishes in me, to work in me the willing and the performing of all that is necessary for my salvation.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XXIII. THE LEADING OF THE SPIRIT

`As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God.' -- Rom. 8:14,16

It is the very same Spirit that leads us as children who also assures us that we are children. Without His leading there can be no assurance of our filiation. True full assurance of faith is enjoyed by him who surrenders himself entirely to the leading of the Spirit.

In what does this leading consist? Chiefly in this, that our whole hidden inner life is guided by Him to what it ought to be. This we must firmly believe. Our growth and increase, our development and progress, is not our work but His: we are to trust Him for this. As a tree or animal grows and becomes large by the spirit of life which God has given to it, so also does the Christian by the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. (Hos. 14:6,7; Matt. 6:28; Mark 4:26,28; Luke 2:40; Rom. 8:2) We have to cherish the joyful assurance that the Spirit whom the Father gives to us does with divine wisdom and power guide our hidden life, and bring it where God will have it.

Then there are also special directions of this leading. `He will lead you into all the truth,' When we read the word of God, we are to wait upon Him, to make us experience the truth, the essential power of what God says. He makes the word living and powerful. He leads us into a life corresponding to the word. (John 6:63, 14:26; 16:13; 1 Cor. 2:10,114; 1 Thess. 2:13)

When you pray, you can reckon upon His leading: `The Spirit helpeth our infirmities.' He leads us to what we must desire. He leads us into the way in which we are to pray, trustfully, persistently, mightily. (Zech 12:10; Rom. 8:26,27; Jude 12,20)

In the way of sanctification it is He that will lead: He leads us in the path of righteousness. He leads us into all the will of God. (1 Cor. 6:19,20; 1 Pet 1:2,15)

In our speaking and working for the Lord, He will lead. Every child has the Spirit: every child has need of Him to know and to do the work of the Father. Without Him no child can please or serve the Father. The leading of the Spirit is the blessed privilege, the sure token, the only power of a child of God. (Matt. 10:20; Acts 1:8; Rom 8:9,13; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:13)

And how then can you fully enjoy this leading? The first thing that is necessary for this is *faith*. You must take time, young Christian, to have your heart filled with the deep and living consciousness that the Spirit is in you. Read all the glorious declarations of your Father in His word concerning what the Spirit is in you and for you, until the conviction wholly fills you that you are really a temple of the Spirit. Ignorance or unbelief on this point makes it impossible for the Spirit to speak in you and to lead you. Cherish an ever-abiding assurance that the Spirit of God dwells in you. (Acts. 19:2; Rom. 5:5; 1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:5 Gal. 3:5,14)

Then the second thing that is necessary is this: you are to *hold yourself still*, to attend to the voice of the Spirit. As the Lord Jesus acts, so does the Spirit. As the Lord Jesus acts, so does also the Spirit: `He shall not cry nor lift up His voice.' He whispers gently and quietly: only the soul that sets itself very silently towards God can perceive His voice and guidance. When we become to a needless extent engrossed with the world, with its business, its cares, its enjoyments, its literature, its politics, the Spirit cannot lead us. When our service of God is a bustling and working in our own wisdom and strength, the Spirit cannot be heard in us. It is the weak, the simple, who are willing to have themselves taught in humility, that receive the leading of the Spirit. Sit down every morning, sit down often in the day, to say: Lord Jesus, I know nothing, I will be silent: let the Spirit lead me. (1 Chron. 19:12;

Ps. 62; 2,6; 131:2; Isa. 43:2; Hab. 2:20; Zech. 4:6 Acts 1:4)

And then: *be obedient*. Listen to the inner voice, and do what it says to you. Fill your heart every day with the word, and when the Spirit puts you in mind of what the word says, betake yourself to the doing of it. So you become capable of further teaching: it is to the obedient that the full blessing of the Spirit is promised. (John 14:15,16; Acts 5:32

Young Christian, know that you are a temple of the Spirit, and that it is only through the daily leading of the Spirit that you can walk as a child of God, with the witness that you are pleasing the Father.

> Precious Saviour, imprint this lesson deeply on my mind. The Holy Spirit is in me. His leading is every day and everywhere indispensable for me. I cannot hear His voice in the word when I do not wait silently upon Him. Lord, let a holy circumspectness keep watch over me, that I may always walk as a pupil of the Spirit. Amen.

1. It is often asked: How do I know that I shall continue standing, that I shall be kept, that I shall increase? The question dishonours the Holy Spirit -- is the token that you do not know Him or do not trust Him. The question indicates that you are seeking the secret of strength for perseverance in yourself, and not in the Holy Spirit, your heavenly Guide.

2. As God sees to it, that every moment there is air for me to breathe, so shall the Holy Spirit unceasingly maintain life in the hidden depths of my soul. He will not break off his own work.

3. From the time that we receive the Holy Spirit, we have nothing to do but to honour his work: to keep our hands off from it, and to trust Him, and to let Him work.

4. The beginning and the end of the work of the Spirit is to reveal Jesus to me, and to cause me to abide in Him. As soon as I would fain look after the work of the Spirit in me, I hinder Him: He cannot work when I am not willing to look upon Jesus.

5. The voice of the Father, the voice of the good Shepherd, the voice of the Holy Spirit is very gentle. We must learn to become deaf to other voices, to the world and its news of friends and their thoughts, to our own Ego and its desires: then shall we distinguish the voice of the Spirit. Let us often set ourselves silent in prayer, entirely silent, to offer up our will and our thoughts, and, with our eye upon Jesus, to keep ear and heart open for the voice of the Spirit.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XXIV. GRIEVING THE SPIRIT

`Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed unto the day of redemption.' -- Eph. 4:30

It is by the Holy Spirit that the child of God is sealed: separated and stamped and marked as the possession of God. This sealing is not a dead or external action that is finished once for all. It is a living process, which has power in the soul, and gives firm assurance of faith, only when it is experienced through the life of the Spirit in us. On this account we are to take great care not to grieve the Spirit: in Him alone can you have every day the joyful certitude and the full blessing of your childship. * It is the very same Spirit that leads us who witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God. And how can any one grieve the Spirit? Above all by yielding to sin. He is the Holy Spirit, given to sanctify us, and, for every sin from which the blood cleanses us, to fill us with the holy life of God, with God. Sin grieves Him. (Isa. 53:10; Acts. 7:51; Heb. 10:29) For this reason the word of God presently states by name the sins against which above all we are to be on our guard. Mark only the four great sins that Paul mentions in connection with our text.

There is first *lying*. There is no single sin that in the Bible is so brought into connection with the devil as lying. Lying is from hell, and it goes on to hell. God is the God of truth. And the Holy Spirit cannot possibly carry forward His blessed working in a man or woman that lies, that is insincere, that does injury to the truth. Young Christian, review with care what the word of God says about lying and liars, and pray God that you may never speak anything but the literal truth. Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God. (Ps. 5:7; Prov. 12:22; 21:28; John 8:44; Rev. 21:8,27; 22:15)

Then there is *anger*. `Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you.' Hastiness, proneness to anger, sin of temper is, along with lying, the most common sin by which the Christian is kept back from increase in grace. (Matt. 5:22,26,27; 1 Cor. 1:10,11; 3:3; 13:1,3; Gal. 5:5; 15:21,26; Col. 3:8,12; 1 Thess. 5:15; Jas. 3:14) Christian, let all passionateness by put away from you: this follows on the command not to grieve the Spirit. Believe that the Holy Spirit, the great power of God, is in you. Surrender yourself every day to His indwelling, in faith that Jesus can keep you by Him: He will make and keep you gentle. Yea, believe, I pray you, in the power of God, and of Jesus and of the Holy Spirit to overcome temper. (Matt. 11:29; 1 Cor. 6:19,20; Gal. 6:1; Eph. 2:16,17; Col. 1:8; 2 Tim. 1:12) Confess the sin: God shall cleanse you from it. Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.

Then there is *stealing*: all sin against the property or possession of my neighbour: all deception and dishonesty in trade, whereby I do wrong to my neighbour, and seek my own advantage at his cost. The law of Christ is love whereby I seek the advantage of my neighbour as well as my own. O the love of money and property, which is inseparable from self-seeking -- it is incompatible with the leading of the Holy Spirit. The Christian must be a man who is known as honest to the back-bone, righteous, and loving his neighbour as himself. (Luke 6:31; Rom. 13:10; 1 Thess. 4:6)

Then says the apostle: `*no corrupt speech* -- but such as is good for edifying as the case may be.' Even the tongue of God's child belongs to his Lord. He must be known by his mode of speech. By his speaking, he can grieve or please the Spirit. The sanctified tongue is a blessing not only to his neighbours but to the speaker himself. Foul talk, idle words, foolish jests -- they grieve the Holy Spirit. They make it impossible for the Spirit to sanctify and to comfort and to fill the heart with the love of God. (Prov. 10:19, 20,21,31; 18:20; Eccles. 5:1,2; Matt. 12:36; Eph. 5:4; Jas. 3:9,10)

Young Christian, I pray you, grieve not the Holy Spirit of God by these or other sins. If you have committed such sins, confess them, and God will cleanse you from them. By the Holy Spirit you are sealed if you would walk in the stability and joy of faith, listen to the word: `Grieve not the Holy Sprit of God.'

> Lord God, my Father in heaven, do, I pray thee, cause me to understand what marvelous grace Thou art manifesting to me, in that Thou hast given to me Thy Holy Spirit in my heart. Lord, let this faith by the argument and the power for cleansing me from every sin. Holy Jesus, sanctify me, that in my thinking, speaking, acting -- in all things, Thine image may appear. Amen.

1. The thought of the Christian about this word, `Grieve not the Holy Spirit' is a touchstone as to whether he understands the life of faith.

For some it is a word of terror and fear. A father once brought a child to the train to go on a journey with the new governess, with whom she was to remain. Before her departure he said: `I hear that she is very sensitive and takes things much amiss: take care that you do nothing to grieve her.' The poor child had no pleasant journey: it appeared to her very grievous to be in anxious fear of one who was so prone to take anything wrong amiss.

This is the view of the Holy Spirit which many have: a Being whom it is difficult to satisfy, who thinks little of our weakness, and who, even though we take pains, is discontented when our work is not perfect.

2. Another father also brought his daughter to the train to go on a journey, and to be a time from home: but in company with her mother, whom she loved very dearly. `You are to be a good child,' said the father, `and do everything to please your mamma; otherwise you shall grieve her and me.' `Oh, certainly, papa!' was the joyful answer of the child. For she felt so happy to be with her mother, and was willing to do her utmost to be agreeable to her.

There are children of God to whom the Holy Spirit is so well known in His tender, helpful love, and the Comforter and the Good Spirit, that the word, `Grieve not the spirit of God' has for them a gentle, encouraging power. May our fear to grieve Him always be the tender childlike fear of trustful love.

* *Kindschap* -- a word coined by the writer to express the relation of a child. Our *childhood* expresses rather the state or stage of child-life. -- Translator

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XXV. FLESH AND SPIRIT

`And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ.' -- 1 Cor. 3:1

`I am carnal, sold under sin: to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death. Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.' -- Rom. 7:14,18; 8:2,9

`Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now perfected in the flesh? If ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law. If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk.' -- Gal. 3:3; 5:18,25

It is of great importance for the young Christian to understand that there are in him two natures, which strive against one another. (Gal. 5:17,24,25; 6:8; Eph. 4:22,24; Col. 3:9,10; 1 Pet. 4:2) If we weigh the texts noted above, we shall see that the word of God teaches us the following truths on this point.

Sin comes from the flesh: the reason why the Christian still does sin is that he yields to the flesh and does not walk by the Spirit. Every Christian has the Spirit and lives by the Spirit, but every Christian does not walk by the Spirit. If he walks by the Spirit, he will not fulfil the desires of the flesh. (Rom. 8:7; 1 Cor. 3:1,3; Gal. 5:16,25)

So long as there are still in the Christian strife and envy, the word of God calls him carnal. He would indeed do good, but he cannot: he does what he would not, because he still strives in his own strength and not in the power of the Spirit. (Rom. 7:18; 1 Cor. 3:3; Gal. 5:15,26)

The flesh remains under the law, and seeks to obey the law. But through the flesh the law is powerless, and the endeavour to do good is vain. Its language is: `I am carnal, sold under sin: to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not.' (Rom. 6:14;15; 7:4,6; 8:3,8; Gal. 5:18; 6:12,13; Heb. 7:18; 8:9,13)

This is not the condition in which God would have his child remain. The word says: `It is God that worketh in you, both to will and to work.' * The Christian must not only live by the Spirit, but also walk by the Spirit. He must be a spiritual man, and abide entirely under the leading of the Spirit. (Rom. 8:14; 1 Cor. 2:15; 3:1; Gal. 6:1) If he thus walks, he will no longer do what he would not. He will no longer remain in the condition of Romans 7, as a new-born babe, still seeking to fulfil the law, but in Romans 8, a one who through the Spirit is made free from the law with its commandment, `do this,' which gives no power, but brings death, and who walks, not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit. (Rom. 7:6; 8:2,13)

There are Christians that begin with the Spirit, but end with the flesh. They are converted, born again through the Spirit, but fall unconsciously into a life in which they endeavour to overcome sin and be holy through their own exertion, through doing their best. They ask God to help them in these their endeavours, and think that this is faith. They do not understand what it is to say: `In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing,' and that therefore they are to cease from their own endeavours, in order to do God's will, wholly and only through the Spirit. (Rom. 7:18; Gal. 3:3; 4:9; 5:4,7)

Child of God, pray, learn what it is to say of yourself, just as you are, even after the new birth: `I am carnal, sold under sin.' *Endeavour no longer to be doing your best, and to be praying to God, and to be trusting Him to help you.* No: learn to say: `The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death.' Let your work every day be to have the Spirit work in you, to walk by the Spirit, and you shall be redeemed from the life of complaining, `the good that I would I do not,' into a life of faith, in which it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do.

Lord God, teach me to acknowledge with all my heart that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth nothing good. Teach me also to cease from every thought, as if I could with my own endeavours serve or please Thee. Teach me to understand that the Spirit is the Comforter, who frees me from all anxiety and fear about my own powerlessness, in order that He may work the strength of Christ in me. Amen.

1. In order to understand the conflict betwixt flesh and Spirit, we must especially seek to have a clear insight into the connection between Rom. 7 and 8. In Rom. 7:6 Paul had spoken of the twofold way of serving God, the one in the oldness of the letter, the other in the newness of the Spirit. In Rom. 7:14.16 he describes the first, in Rom. 8:1-16 the second. This appears clearly when we observe that in ch. 7 he mentions the Spirit but once, the law more than twenty times; in Rom. 8:1-16, the Spirit sixteen times. In Rom. 7 we see the regenerate soul, just as he is in himself with his new nature, desirous, but powerless, to fulfil the law, mourning as one who `is captive under the law of sin.' In Rom. 8 we hear him say, `the law of the Spirit of life in Christ made me free from the law of sin.' Rom. 7 describes the ever-abiding condition of the Christian, contemplated as renewed, but not experiencing by faith the power of the Holy Spirit: Rom. 8 his life in the freedom which the Spirit of God really gives from the power of sin.

2. It is of very great importance to understand that the conflict between grace and works, between faith and one's own power, between the Holy Spirit and confidence in ourselves and the flesh, always continues to go on, not only in connection with conversion and the reception of the righteousness of God, but even further, into a walk in this righteousness. On this account the Christian has to watch very carefully against the deep inclination of his heart still to work in his own behalf, when he sees in himself anything wrong or when he would follow after holiness, instead of always and only trusting in Jesus Christ, and so serving God in the Spirit.

3. In order to make clear the opposition between the two methods of serving God, let me adduce consecutively in their entirety the passages in which they are expressed with special distinctness. Compare them with care. Pray God for the Spirit in order to make you understand them. Take deeply to heart the lesson as to how you are to serve God well, and how not.

The circumcision of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter. (Rom. 2:29)

To him that worketh not but believeth, his faith is reckoned for righteousness. (Rom. 4:5)

Ye are not under the law but under grace. (Rom. 6:14)

We have been discharged from the law, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter. (Rom. 7:6)

We know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. (Rom. 7:14)

The ordinance of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. (Rom. 8:4)

Ye received not the Spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye received the Spirit of adoption. (Rom. 8:15)

The righteousness which is of the law is: `The man that doeth these things shall live by them? But the righteousness which is of faith saith thus, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend? Who shall descend? But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart. (Rom. 5:5-8)

If it is by grace, it is no more of works. (Rom. 11:6)

I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ. (1 Cor. 3:7)

I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me. (Gal. 2:20)

The righteous shall live by faith; yet the law is not of faith: but the man that doeth these things shall live by them. (Gal. 3:11,12)

If the inheritance is of the law, it is no more of promise. (Gal. 3:19)

So that thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son. (Gal. 4:7)

Wherefore, brethren, we are not children of a handmaid, but of the free-woman. (Gal. 4:31)

Walk by the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. (Gal. 5:16)

If ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law. (Gal. 5:18)

Who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. (Phil. 3:3)

Another priest, who hath been made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. (Heb. 8:16)

4. Beloved Christian, you have received the Holy Spirit from the Lord Jesus to reveal Him and His life in you, and to mortify the working of the body of sin. Pray much to be filled with the Spirit. Live in the joyful faith that the Spirit is in you, as your Comforter and Teacher, and that through Him all will come right. Learn by heart this text, and let it live in your heart and on your lips: `We are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.'

* The Dutch version has -- `and to accomplish.' -- Translator

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XXVI. THE LIFE OF FAITH

`The righteous shall live by his faith.' -- Hab. 2:4

`We have been discharged from the law, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.' -- Rom. 7:6

`I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me.' -- Gal. 2:20

The word from Habakkuk is thrice quoted in the New Testament as the Divine representation of salvation in Christ by faith alone. (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38) But that word is oftentimes very imperfectly understood, as if it ran: Man shall on his conversion be justified by faith. The word includes this, but signifies much more. It says that the righteous shall *live* by faith: the whole life of the righteous, from moment to moment, shall be by faith. (Rom. 5:17,21; 6:11; 8:2; Gal. 2:20; 1 John 5:11,12)

We all know how sharp is the opposition which God in His word presents betwixt the grace that comes by faith and the law that works -- demands. This is generally admitted with reference to justification. But that distinction holds just as much of the whole life of sanctification. The righteous shall live by faith alone, that is, shall have power to live according to the will of God. As at his conversion he found it necessary to understand that there was nothing good in him, and that he must receive grace as one that was powerless and godless, so must he as a believer just as clearly understand that in him there is nothing good, and that he must receive his power for good every moment from above. (Rom. 7:18; 8:2,13; Heb. 11:38) And his work must therefore be every morning and every hour to look up and believe and receive his power from above, out of his Lord in heaven. *I am not to do what I can, and hope in the Lord to supply strength.* No: as one who has been dead, who is literally able for nothing in himself, and whose life is in his Lord above, I am to reckon by faith on Him who will work in me mightily (Rom. 4:17; 2 Cor. 1:9; Col. 1:20; 2:3)

Happy the Christian who understands that his greatest danger every day is again to fall under the law, and to be fain to serve God in the flesh with his own strength. Happy when he discerns that he is not under the law which just demands and yet is powerless through the flesh, but is under grace where we have simply to receive what has been given. Happy when he fully appropriates for himself the promise of the Spirit who transfers all that is in Christ to him. Yea, happy when he understands what it is to live by faith, and to serve, not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit. (Rom. 7:4,6; 12:5,6; Gal. 5:18; Phil. 3:3)

Let us make our own the words of Paul: they present to us the true life of faith: `I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live.' My flesh, not only my sin, but my flesh, all that is of myself, my own living and willing my own power and working, have I given up to death. I Live no longer -- of myself, I cannot. I will not live, or do anything. (John 15:4,5; 1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 12:10) Christ lives in me: He Himself, by His Spirit, is my power, and teaches and strengthens me to live as I ought to do. And that life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in Him: my great work is to reckon upon Him to work in Him, as well the willing as the accomplishment.

Young Christian, let this life of faith be your faith.

O my Lord Jesus, Thou art my life: yea, my life. Thou livest in me, and art willing to take my

whole life at Thine own charges. And my whole life may daily be a joyful trust and experience that Thou art working all in me. Precious Lord, to that life of faith will I surrender myself. Yea, to Thee I surrender myself, to teach me and to reveal Thyself fully in me. Amen.

1. Do you discern the error of the expression -- *if the Lord helps me* -- *the Lord must help me?* In natural things we speak thus, for we have a certain measure of power, and the Lord will increase it. But the New Testament never uses the expression `help' of the grace of God in the soul. We have absolutely no power -- God is not to help us, because we are weak: no, He is to give His life and His power in us as entirely impotent. He that discerns this aright will learn to live by faith alone.

2. `Without faith it is impossible to please God'; `All that is not of faith is sin.' Such works of the Spirit of God teach us how really every deed and disposition of our life is to be full of faith.

3. Hence our first work every day is anew to exercise faith in Jesus as our life; to believe that He dwells in us, and will do all for us and in us. This faith must be the mood of our soul the whole day. This faith cannot be maintained except in the fellowship and nearness of Jesus Himself.

4. This faith has its power in the mutual surrender of Jesus and the believer to each other. Jesus first gives Himself wholly for us. The believer gives himself wholly in order to be taken into possession and guided by Jesus. Then the soul cannot even doubt if He will do all for it.

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XXVII. THE MIGHT OF SATAN

`Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat: but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not.' -- Luke 22:31,32

There is nothing that makes an enemy so dangerous as the fact that he remains hidden or forgotten. Of the three great enemies of the Christian, the world, the flesh, and the devil, the last is the most dangerous, not only because it is he that, strictly speaking, lends to the others what power they have, but also because he is not seen, and, therefore, little known or feared. The devil has the power of darkness: he darkens the eyes, so that men do not know him. He surrounds himself with darkness, so that he is not observed. Yea, he has even the power to appear as an angel of light. (Matt. 4:6; 2 Cor. 4:4; 11:14) It is by the faith that recognizes things unseen that the Christian is to endeavour to know Satan, even as the Scripture has revealed him.

When the Lord Jesus was living upon earth, His great work was to overcome Satan. When at His baptism He was filled with the Spirit, this fulness of the Spirit brought him into contact with Satan as head of the world of evil spirits, to combat him and to overcome him. (Matt. 4:1,10) After that time the eyes of the Lord were always open to the power and working of Satan. In all sin and misery He saw the revelation of the mighty kingdom of the very same superior, the evil one. Not only in the demoniacs, but also in the sick, He saw the enemy of God and man. (Matt. 12:28; Mark 4:15; Luke 13:16; Acts. 10:38) In the advice of Peter to avoid the cross, and in his denial of his Lord, where we should think of the revelation of the natural character of Peter, Jesus saw the work of Satan. (Matt. 26:23; Luke 22:31,32) In His own suffering, where we rather speak of the sin of man and the permission of God, Jesus perceives the power of darkness. His whole work in living and in dying was to destroy the works of Satan, as He shall also at His second coming utterly bruise Satan himself. (Luke 10:18; 22:3,53; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Rom. 16:20; Col. 2:15; 2 Thess. 2:8,9; 1 John 3:8)

His word to Peter, compared with the personal experience of the Lord, gives us a fearful insight into the work of the enemy. `Satan hath eagerly desired you,' says Jesus. `As a roaring lion, he walketh about, seeking whom he may devour,' says Peter himself later on. (1 Cor. 7:5; 2 Cor. 2:10; 1 Pet. 5:8) He has no unlimited power, but he is always eager to make use of every weak or unguarded moment. `That he might sift you as wheat:' what a picture! This world, yea, even the Church of Christ, is the threshing-floor of Satan. The corn belongs to God; the chaff is his own. He sifts and sifts continually, and all that falls through with the chaff he endeavours to take for himself. And many a Christian is there who does fall through in a terrible fashion, and who, were it not for the intercession of his Lord, would perish for ever. (1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20)

Satan has more than one sieve. The first is generally wordly-mindedness -- the love of the world. Many a one is pious in his time of poverty, but when he becomes rich, he again eagerly strives to win the world. Or in the time of conversion and awakening he appears very zealous, but through the care of the world he is led astray. (Matt. 4:9; 8:22; 1 Tim. 6:9,10; 2 Tim. 4:10)

A second sieve is self-love and self-seeking. Whenever any one does not give himself undividedly to serve his Lord and his neighbour, and to love his neighbour in the Lord, it soon appears that the principal token of a disciple is lacking in him. It will be manifest that many a one, with a fair profession of being devoted to the service of God, fails utterly on this point, and must be reckoned with the chaff. Lovelessness is the sure token of the power of Satan. (John 8:44; 1 John 3:10,15; 4:20)

Yet another sieve, a very dangerous one, is self-confidence. Under the name of following the Spirit, one may

listen to the thoughts of his own heart. He is zealous for the Lord, but with a carnal zeal, in which the gentleness of the Lamb of God is not seen. Without being observed, the movements of the flesh mingle with the workings of the Spirit, and while he boasts that he is overcoming Satan, he is being secretly ensnared by him. (Gal. 3:3; 5:13)

O it is a serious life here upon the earth, where God gives permission for Satan to set his threshing floor even in the Church. Happy are they who with deep humility, with fear and trembling, distrust themselves. Our only security is in the intercession and guidance of Him who overcame Satan. (Eph. 6:10,12,16) Far be from us the idea that we know all the depths of Satan, and are a match for all his cunning stratagems. It is in the region of the spirit, in the invisible, that he works and has power, as well as in the visible. Let us fear lest, while we have known and overcome him in the visible, he should prevail over us in the spiritual. May our only security be the conviction of our frailty and weakness, our confidence in Him who certainly keeps the lowly in heart.

> Lord Jesus, open our eyes to know our enemy and his wiles. Cause us to see him and his realm, that we may dread all that is of him. And open our eyes to see how Thou hast overcome him, and how in Thee we are invincible. O teach us what it is to be *in Thee,* to mortify all that is of the mere Ego and the will of the flesh, and to be strong in weakness and lowliness. And teach us to bring into prayer the conflict of faith against every stronghold of Satan, because we know that Thou wilt bruise him under our feet. Amen.

1. What comfort does the knowledge of the existence of Satan give us? We know then that sin is derived from a foreign power which has thrust itself into our nature, and does not naturally belong to us. We know besides that he has been entirely vanquished by the Lord Jesus, and thus has no power over us so long as we abide trustfully in Christ.

2. The whole of this world, with all that is in it, is under the domination of Satan: therefore there is nothing, even what appears good and fair, that may not be dangerous for us. In all things, even in what is lawful and right, we must be led and sanctified by the Spirit, if we would continue liberated from the power of Satan.

3. Satan is an evil spirit: only by the good Spirit, the Spirit of God, can we offer resistance to him. He works in the invisible: in order to combat him, we have, by prayer, to enter into the invisible. He is a mighty prince: only in the name of One who is mightier and in fellowship with Him can we overcome.

4. What a glorious work is labour for souls, for the lost, for drunkards, for heathen; a conflict to rescue them from the might of Satan. (Acts. 26:18)

5. In the Revelation the victory over Satan is ascribed to the blood of the Lamb. (Rev. 12:11) Christians have also testified that there is no power in temptation, because Satan readily retreats when one appeals to the blood, by which one knows that sin has been entirely expiated, and we are thus also wholly freed from his power.

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XXVIII. THE CONFLICT OF THE CHRISTIAN

`Strive to enter in by the narrow door.' -- Luke 13:24
`Fight the good fight of the faith.' -- 1 Tim. 6:12
`I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.' -- 2 Tim. 4:7

These texts speak of a twofold conflict. The first is addressed to the unconverted: `Strive to enter in by the narrow door.' Entrance by a door is the work of a moment: the sinner is not to strive to enter during his whole lifetime: he is to strive and do it immediately. He is not to suffer anything to hold him back; he must enter in. (Gen. 19:22; John 10:9; 2 Cor. 6:2; Heb. 4:6,7)

Then comes the second, the life-long conflict: by the narrow door I come upon the new way. On the new way there are still always enemies. Of this life-long conflict Paul says: `I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.' With respect to the continuous conflict, he gives the charge: `Fight the good fight of faith.'

There is much misunderstanding about this twofold conflict. Many strive all their life against the Lord and His summons, and, because they are not at rest, but feel an inner conflict, they think that this is the conflict of a Christian. Assuredly not: this is the struggle against God of one who is not willing to abandon everything and surrender himself to the Lord. (Acts 5:39; 1 Cor. 10:22) This is not the conflict that the Lord would have. What He says is that the conflict is concerned with entering in: but not a conflict for long years. No: He desires that you should break through the enemies that would hold you back, and immediately enter in.

Then follows the second conflict, which endures for life. Paul twice calls this the fight of faith. The chief characteristic of it is faith. He who understands well that the principal element in the battle is to believe, and acts accordingly, does certainly carry off the palm: just as in another passage Paul says to the Christian combatant: `Withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one.' (Eph. 6:16; 1 John 3:4,5)

And what then does it mean, this `fight of faith'? That, while I strive, I am to believe that the Lord will help me? No: it is not so, although it often is so understood.

In a conflict it is of supreme importance that I should be in a stronghold or fortress which cannot be taken. With such a stronghold a weak garrison can offer resistance to a powerful enemy. Our conflict as Christians is now no longer concerned with going into the fortress. No: we have gone in, and are now in; and so long as we remain in it, we are invincible. The stronghold, this stable fort, is Christ. (Ps. 18:3; 46:2; 62:2,3,6,7,8; 144:2; Eph. 6:10) By faith we are in Him: by faith we know that the enemy can make no progress against our fortress. The wiles of Satan all go forth on the line of enticing us out of our fortress, of engaging us in conflict with him on the open plain. There he always overcomes. But if we only strive in faith, abiding in Christ by faith, then we overcome, because Satan then has to deal with Him, and because He then fights and overcomes. (Ex. 14:14; Josh 5:14; 2 Chron. 23:15; John 26:33; Rom. 8:37; 2 Cor. 2:14) `This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith.' Our first and greatest work is thus to believe. As Paul said before he mentions the warlike equipment of the Christian: `From henceforth be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might.'

The reason why the victory is only by faith, and why the fight of faith is the good fight, is this: it is the Lord Jesus who purchased the victory, and who therefore alone gives power and dominion over the enemy. If we are, and abide, in Him, and surrender ourselves to live in Him, and by faith appropriate what He is, then the victory is

in itself our own. We then understand: `The battle is not yours, but God's. The Lord your God shall fight for you, and ye shall be still.' Just as we in opposition to God can achieve nothing good of ourselves, but in Christ please Him, so also is it in opposition to Satan: in ourselves we achieve nothing, but in Christ we are more than conquerors. By faith we stand in Him righteous before God, and just so in Him are we strong against our enemies. (Ps. 44:4,9; Isa. 45:24)

In this light we can read and take home to ourselves all the noble passages in the Old Testament, especially in the Psalms, where the glorious conflict of God in behalf of his people is spoken of. Fear, or spiritlessness, or uncertainty, makes weak, and cannot overcome: faith in the living God is equal to everything. (Deut. 20:3,8; Josh. 6:20; Judges 7:3 Ps. 18:32-40; Heb. 11:23) In Christ this truth is now still more real. God has come near. His power works in us who believe; it is really He that fights for us.

> O Lord Jesus, who art the Prince of the army of the Lord, the Hero, the Victor, teach me to be strong in Thee my stronghold, and in the power of Thy might. Teach me to understand what the good fight of faith is, and how the one thing that I have need of is, always to look to Thee, to Thee, the supreme Guide of faith. And, consequently, in me, too, let this be the victory that overcometh the world, namely, my faith. Amen.

1. The conflict of faith is no civil war, in which one half of the kingdom is divided against the other. This would be insurrection. This is the one conflict that many Christians know: the unrest of the conscience, and the powerless wrestling of a will which consents to that which is good, but does not perform it. The Christian has not to overcome himself. This his Lord does when he surrenders himself. Then he is free and strong to combat and overcome the enemies of his Lord and of the kingdom. No sooner, however, are we willing that God should have His way with us than we are found striving against God. This also is truly conflict, but it is not the good fight of faith.

2. In Galatians 5 reference is made to the inner conflict; for the Galatians had not yet entirely surrendered themselves to the Spirit, to walk after the Spirit. `The connection,' says Lange, `shows that this conflict betwixt the flesh and the Spirit of God is not endless, but that there is expected of the Christian a complete surrender of himself, in order to be led only by the one principle -- the Spirit; and then, further, a refusal to obey the flesh.' The believer must not strive against the flesh, to overcome it: this he cannot do. What he is to do is to choose to whom he will subject himself: by the surrender of faith to Christ, to strive in Him through the Spirit, He has a divine power for overcoming.

3. Hence, as we have seen in connection with the beginning of the new life, our one work every day and the whole day is to believe. Out of faith come all blessings and powers, also the victory for overcoming.

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by Andrew Murray

XXIX BE A BLESSING

`Get thee out of they country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee; and be thou a blessing.' -- Gen. 12:1,2

In these first words that God spake to Abraham, we have the short summary of all that God has to say to him and to us as His children. We see what the goal is to which God calls us, what the power that carries us to that goal, and what the place where the power is found.

Be a blessing: that is the goal for which God separates Abraham and every believing child of His.

God would have him and us made to understand that, when he blesses us, this is certainly not simply to make us happy, but that we should still further communicate His blessing. (Matt. 5:34,35; 10:8; 18:33) God Himself is love, and therefore He blesses. Love seeketh not itself: when the love of God comes to us, it will seek others through us. (Isa. 43:10,11; 1 Cor. 13:5; 1 John 4:11) The young Christian must from the beginning understand that he has received grace with the definite aim of becoming a blessing to others. Pray, keep not for yourself what the Lord gives to you for others. Offer yourself expressly and completely to the Lord, to be used by Him for others: that is the way to be blessed oveflowingly yourself. (Ps. 112:5,9; Prov. 11:24,25; Matt. 25:40; 1 Cor. 15;58; 2 Cor. 9:6; Heb. 6:10)

The power for this work will be given. `Be a blessing': `I will bless thee,' says the Lord. You are to be personally blessed yourself, personally sanctified and filled with the Spirit, and peace, and power of the Lord: then you have power to bless. (Luke 24:49; John 7:38; 14:12) In Christ God has `blessed us with all spiritual things': let Jesus fill you with these blessings, and you shall certainly be a blessing: you need not doubt or fear. The blessing of God includes in it the power of life for multiplication, for expansion, for communication. See in the Scriptures how blessing and multiplication go together. (Gen. 1:22,28; 9:1; 22:17; 26:24) Blessing always includes the power to bless others. Only give the word of the Almighty God, `I will bless Thee,' time to sink into your spirit. Wait upon God, that He Himself may say to you, `I will bless thee.' Let your faith cleave fast to this. God will make it truth to you above all asking and thinking. (2 Cor. 9:8,11; Eph. 1:3; Heb. 6:14)

But for this end you must also betake yourself to the place of blessing: the land of promise, the simple life of faith in the promises. `Get thee out thy land and thy father's house,' says the Lord. Departure, separation from the life of nature and the flesh, in which we were born of our father Adam, is what God would have. The offering up of what is most precious to man is the way to the blessing of God. (Luke 28:29,30; John 12:24,25; 2 Cor. 6:17,18) `Get thee to a land that I will show thee,' says the Lord, out of the old life to a new life, where I alone am your guide; that is, a life where God can have me wholly for Himself alone, where I walk only on the promises of God -- a life of faith.

Christian, God will in a Divine fashion fulfil to you His promise, `I will bless thee.' O go, pray, out of your land and your father's house, out of the life of nature and the flesh, out of intercourse with the flesh and this world, to the New Life, the life of the Spirit, the life in fellowship with God to which He will lead you. There you become receptive of His blessing; there your heart becomes open to full faith in His word, `I will bless thee'; there He can fulfil that word to you, and make you full of His blessing and power to be a blessing to others. Live with God, separated from the world: then shall you hear the voice of God speak with power: `I will bless thee'; `Be thou a blessing.'

O my Father, show me the way to that promised land where Thou bringest Thy people to have them wholly for Thyself. I will abandon everything to follow Thee, to hold converse with Thee alone, in order that Thou mayest fill me with Thy blessing. Lord, let Thy word, `I will bless thee,' live in my heart as a word of God: then shall I give myself wholly to live for others and to be a blessing. Amen.

1. God is the great, the only Fountain of blessing: as much of God as I have in me, so much blessing can I bring. I can work much for others without blessing. Actually to be a blessing, I must begin with that word, `I will bless thee': then the other, `Be a blessing' becomes easy.

2. In order to become a blessing, begin on a small scale: yield yourself up for others. Live to make others happy. Believe that the love of God dwells in you by the Spirit, and give yourself wholly to be a blessing and a joy to those who are round about you. Pray God to shed abroad His love in you still further by the Spirit. And believe very firmly that God can make you a greater blessing than you can think, if you surrender yourself to Him for this end.

3. But this surrender must have time in solitary prayer, that God may obtain possession of your spirit. This is for you the departure from your father's house: separate yourself from men that God may speak with you.

4. What think you? Was Abraham ever filled with regret that he placed himself so entirely under the leading of God? Then do you likewise.

5. Do you now know the two words which are the source of all promises and all commands to the children of believing Abraham? The promise is: `I will bless thee.' The command is: `Be a blessing.' Pray, take them both firmly for yourself.

6. And do you now understand where these two words to Abraham are fulfilled? In separation from his father's house -- in the walk in fellowship with God.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XXX. PERSONAL WORK

`Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation: and uphold me with a free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee.' -- Ps. 51:12,13
`I believe, for I will speak.' -- Ps. 116:10
`But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you.' -- Acts. 1:8

Every redeemed man is called to be a witness for his Lord. Not only by a godly walk, but by personal effort must I serve and make known my Lord. My tongue, my speech, is one of the principal means of intercourse with others and influence upon them. It is but a half dedication, when I do not also bring the offering of the lips, to speak for the Lord. (Ps. 40:10,11; 66:16; 71:8,15,24; Heb 13:15)

Of this work there is inconceivably real need. There are thousands of Christians who continually enjoy the preaching of the word, and yet do not understand the way of salvation. The Lord Jesus not only preached to the multitudes, but also spoke to individuals according to their needs. (Luke 7:40; John 3:3; 4:7) Scripture is full of examples of those who told to others what the Lord had done for them, and who thus became a blessing to them. (Ex. 18:8,1; 2 Chron. 5:3) The teacher alone cannot do this work of personal speaking: every ransomed soul must co-operate with him. He is in the world as a witness for his Lord. His own life cannot come to its full healthy increase, if he does not confess his Lord and work for Him.

That witness for the Lord must be a personal witness. We must have the courage to say, `He has redeemed me: He will also redeem you: will you not accept this redemption? Come, let me show you the way.' (John 1:42,46; 4:28,39; Acts. 11:19) There are hundreds who would be glad if the personal question were put to them, `Are you redeemed? What keeps you back? Can I not help you to go to the Lord?' Parents ought to speak personally with their children, and put the question, `My child, have you already received the Lord Jesus?' Teachers in Sabbath schools and in day schools, when they teach the word of God, ought to bring forward the personal question, whether the children have really received salvation, and ought to seek the opportunity of also putting the question to them separately. Friends must speak with their friends. Yes: before all else should this work be done.

Such work must be the work of love. Let souls feel that you love them tenderly. Let the humility and gentleness of love, as this was to be seen in Jesus, be seen also in you. At every turn surrender yourself to Jesus to be filled with His love: not by feeling, but by faith in this love, can you do your work. `Beloved, keep yourselves in the love of God. And on some have mercy who are in doubt; and some save, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear.' The flesh often thinks that strength and force do more than love and patience. But that is not so: love achieves everything: it has overcome on the cross. (Heb. 3:13; 10:24; Jude 21:23)

Such work must be the work of faith, of faith working by love: faith that the Lord desires to use you and will use you. Be not afraid on account of your weakness: learn in the Scriptures what glorious promises God from time to time gave to those who had to speak for Him. (Ex. 4:11,12; Josh. 1:9; Isa. 50:4,11; Jer. 1:6,7; Matt. 10:19,20) Surrender yourself continually to God to be used for the rescue of souls, and take your stand on the fact that He who has redeemed you for this end, will for this end bless you. Although your work is in weakness and fear, although no blessing appears to come, be of good courage: at His time, we shall reap. (2 Chron. 15:7; Ps. 126:6,7; Hag. 2:5; Gal. 8:9; 1 John 5:16) Be filled with faith in the power of God, in His blessing upon you, and in the certainty of the hearing of prayer. `If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and

God will give him life.' Whether it be the most miserable and neglected, or whether it be the decent but indifferent who does not know his sin, take courage, the Lord is mighty to bless: He hears prayer.

But above all, -- for this is the principal point, -- carry out this work in fellowship with Jesus. Live closely with Him -- live entirely for Him -- let Jesus be in all your own life and He will speak and work in you. (Acts. 4:13; 2 Cor. 3:5; 8:3) Be full of the blessing of the Lord, full of His Spirit and His love, and it cannot be otherwise than that you should be a blessing. You shall be able to tell what He is continually for you. You shall have the love and the courage, with all humility, to put to souls the question, `Is it well with you? Have you indeed the Lord Jesus as your Saviour?' And the Lord will made you experience the rich blessing which is promised to those who live to bless others.

Young Christian, be a witness for Jesus. Live as one who is wholly given away to Him to watch and to work for His honour.

> Blessed Lord, who hast redeemed me to serve the Father in the proclamation of His love, I will with a free spirit offer myself to Thee for this end. Fill my heart for this end with love to Him, to Thee, and to souls. Cause me to see what an honour it is to do the work of redeeming love, even as Thou didst do it. Strengthen my confidence that Thou art working with Thy power in my weakness. And let my joy be to help souls to Thee. Amen.

1. The question is often asked, `What can I do to work for the Lord? Can you not take a class in the Sabbath school? Perhaps you live in the country where there are children that have no hour of the Sabbath devoted to them. Perhaps there are heathen children, or even grown-up people of the farms, who do not go to Church. See whether you cannot gather them together in the name of Jesus. Make it a matter of prayer and faith. Although you do this work with trembling, you may be sure that to begin to work will make you strong.

Or can you do nothing for the circulation of books and tracts? When you have a book that has been useful to you, order six or twelve copies of it. Speak of it, and offer it for sale: you can do great service by this means. So also with tracts: if you are too poor to give them for nothing, have them to sell: you may procure blessing by this method. It will especially help you to speak to others, if you begin with telling what is in a book.

2. But the principal thing is personal speaking. Do not hold back because you feel no freedom. The Lord will give you freedom in His own time. It is incredible how many are lost through ignorance. No one has ever personally made it clear to them how they can be saved. The thought that a change must first be sought and felt is so deeply rooted that the most faithful preaching is often of no avail against it. By their erroneous ideas, people misunderstand everything. Begin then to speak and to help souls to understand that they are to receive Jesus just as they are, that they can certainly know that He receives them, and that this is the power of a new and holy life.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XXXI. MISSIONARY WORK

`And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed.' -- Mark 16:15,20

Every friend of Jesus is a friend of missions. Where there is a healthy spiritual life, there is a love for the missionary cause. When you consider the reasons of this, you obtain an insight into the glory of missions, and into your calling to embrace this cause as apart of your soul's life. Come and hear how much there is to make missionary work glorious and precious.

1. It is the cause for which Jesus left the throne of heaven. The heathen are His inheritance, given to Him by His Father. It is in heathendom that the power of Satan has been established. Jesus must have Himself vindicated as the conqueror. His glory, the coming and manifestation of His kingdom, depend on missions. (Isa. 2:8; Matt. 24:14; 28:18,28; Mark 13:10; Luke 21:24; Rom. 11:25)

2. Missionary work is the principal aim of the church on earth. All the last words of the Lord Jesus teach us this. (Mark. 26:15; Luke 24:47; John 27:18; Acts 1:8) The Lord is the head and He has made himself dependent upon His body, upon His members, by whom alone He can do His work. (1 Cor. 7:21) As a member of Christ, as a member of the church, shall I not give myself to take part in the work, that this goal may be reached?

3. It is the work for which the Holy Spirit was given. See this in the promise of the Spirit: in the leading of the Spirit vouschafed to Peter and Barnabas and Saul. (Acts 1:8; 11:12,23,24; 8:2,4; 22:21) In the history of the Church we find that times of revival go hand in hand with new zeal for the missionary cause. The Holy Spirit is always a holy enthusiasm for the extension of the kingdom.

4. Missionary work brings blessing on the Church. It rouses to heroic deeds of faith and self-denial. It has furnished the most glorious instances of the wondrous power of the Lord. It gives heavenly joy over the conversion of sinners to those who watch for it with love and prayer. It cleanses the heart to understand God's great plans, and to await the fulfilment of them in supplication. Missionary work is a token of life in a Church, and brings more life. (Acts 14:287; 15:4,5; Rom. 11:25,33; 15:10; Eph. 3:5,8,10)

5. What a blessing it is for the world. What would we have been, had not missionaries come to our heathen forefathers in Europe? What a glorious blessing has onto missionary work already won in some lands? What help is there for the hundred millions of heathen, if not in missions? (Isa. 49:6,12,18,22; 54:1,2) Heaven and hell look upon missions as the battlefield where the powers of Satan and of Jesus Christ encounter one another. Alas! that the conflict should be carried on so feebly.

6. There will be a blessing for your own soul in love for missionary work. (Prov. 11:24,25; Isa. 58:7,8)

You will be exercised in faith. Missionary work is a cause for faith, where everything goes on slowly, and not according to the fancy of men. You will learn to cleave to God and the word.

Love will be awakened. You will learn to go out of yourselves and your little circle, and with an open eye and a large heart to live in the interests of your Lord and King: you will feel how little true love you have, and you will receive more love.

You will be drawn into prayer. Your calling and power as an intercessor will become clearer to you, and therewith the blessedness of thus co-operation for the kingdom. You will discern how it is the highest conformity to Him who came to seek the lost, to give up your own ease and rest to fight in love the fight of prayer against

Satan in behalf of the heathen.

Young Christian, missionary work is more glorious and holy than you suppose. There is more blessing in it than you are aware of. The new life in you depends upon it more than you can as yet understand. Yield yourself up anew in obedience to the word to give missions a large place in your heart; yes, in your heart. The Lord Himself will further teach and bless you.

And if you would know how to have your love for missions, as the work of your Lord, increased, attend to the following hints: - Become acquainted with the missionary cause. Endeavour by writings and books to know what the condition and need of heathendom is; what, by the blessing of the Lord, has been already done there; what the work is that is being done now. Speak with others about this cause. Perhaps there could be instituted in your neighbourhood a little missionary society. Perhaps one of your prayer-meetings, say, once a month, could be set apart for prayer in behalf of the missionary cause. Pray also for this in secret. Let the coming of the kingdom have a definite place in your secret prayers. Endeavour to follow the material for prayer in the promises of the word about the heathen, in the whole Scriptures, especially in the prophet Isaiah. (Isa. 49:6,18,21,22; 54:1,3; 60:1,3,11,16; 62:2) Give also for missions: not only when you are asked; not merely what you can spare without feeling it; but set apart for this cause a portion of what you possess or earn. Let the Lord see that you are in earnest with His work. If there is missionary work that is being done in your neighbourhood, show yourself a friend to it. Although there be much imperfection in that work, -- and where is there work of man that is perfect? -- complain not of the imperfection, but look upon the essence of the cause, the endeavour to obey the command of the Lord, and give your prayer and your help. A friend of Jesus is a friend of missions. Love for missionary work is an indispensable element of the new life.

> Son of God, when Thou didst breathe Thy Spirit upon Thy disciples, saying, `Receive ye the Holy Ghost,' Thou didst add: `As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.' Lord, here am I: send me also. Breathe Thy Spirit into me also, that I may live for Thy kingdom. Amen.

1. `Unknown makes unbeloved,' is a word that is specially true of missionary work. He who is acquainted with the wonders that God has wrought in some lands, will praise and thank God for what the missionary enterprise has achieved, and will be strengthened in his faith that missionary work is really God's own cause.

Among the books that help to awaken interest in missions are biographies of missionaries. `The life of Henry Martyn' is one, formerly issued by the Book Society. `Uncle Charles' is the name of a book with an account of missionary work in South Africa. Some books on missions are generally to be found in our Sabbath school libraries.

2. We should never forget that the missionary cause is an enterprise of *faith*. It requires faith in the promises of God, in the power of God. It has need of love -- love to Jesus, whereby the heart is filled with desire for His honour, and love to souls, that longs for their safety. It is a work of the Spirit of God, `whom the world cannot receive': therefore the world can approve of missions only when they go forward with the highest prosperity.

3. Let no friend of missions become discouraged when the work proceeds slowly. Although all baptized men are not converted, although even amongst the converts there is still much perversity, and some fall back after a fair professions. Amongst our forefathers in Europe, a whole century was occupied with the introduction of Christianity. Sometimes a nation received Christianity to cast it off again after thirty or forty years. It required a thousand years to bring them up to the height at which we now stand. Let us not expect too much from the heathen at once, but with love and patience and firm faith, pray and work, and expect the blessing of God.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XXXII. LIGHT AND JOYFULNESS

`Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy Continence. In Thy name do they rejoice all the day.' -- Ps. 89:15,16
`Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.' -- Ps. 47:11
`I am the Light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life.' -- John 8:12
`I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh away from you.' -- John 16:22
`As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.' -- 2 Cor. 6:10

A father will always be eager to see his children joyful. He does all that he can to make them happy. Hence God also desires that His children should walk before Him in gladness of heart. He has promised them gladness: He will give it. (Ps. 89:16,17; Isa. 29:29; John 26:22; 1 Pet. 1:8) He has commanded it: we must take it and walk in it at all times. (Ps. 32:1; Isa. 12:5,6; 1 Thess. 5:16; Phil. 4:4)

The reason of this is not difficult to find. Gladness is always the token that something really satisfies me and has great value for me. More than anything else is gladness for what I possess a recommendation of it to others. And gladness in God is the strongest proof that I have in God what satisfies and satiates me, that I do not serve Him with dread, or to be kept, but because He is my salvation. Gladness is the token of the truth and the worth of obedience, showing whether I have pleasure in the will of God. (Deut. 28:47; Ps. 40:9; 119:11) It is for this reason that joy in God is so acceptable to Him, so strengthening to believers themselves, and to all who are around the most eloquent testimony of what we think of God. (Neh. 8:11; Ps. 68:4; Prov. 4:18)

In the Scriptures light and gladness are frequently connected with each other. (Esth. 8:16; Prov. 13:9; 15:30; Isa. 60:20) It is so in nature. The joyful light of the morning awakens the birds to their song and gladdens the watchers who in the darkness have longed for the day. It is the light of God's countenance that gives the Christian his gladness: in fellowship with his Lord, he can, and always will, be happy: the love of the Father shines like the sun upon His children. (Ex. 10:23; 2 Sam. 23:4; Ps. 36:10; Isa. 60:1,20; 1 John 1:5; 4:16) When darkness comes over the soul, it is always through one of two things, through sin or through unbelief. Sin is darkness, and makes dark. And unbelief also makes dark, for it turns us from Him, who alone is the light.

The question is sometimes put, Can the Christian walk always in the light? The answer of our Lord is clear, `He that followeth Me shall *not* walk in darkness.' It is sin, the turning from behind Jesus to our own way, that makes dark. But at the moment we confess sin, and have it cleansed in the blood, we are again in the light. (Josh. 7:13; Isa. 58:10; 59:1,2,9; Matt. 15:14,15; 2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:8,14; 1 Thess. 5:5; 1 John 2:10) Or it is unbelief that makes dark. We look to ourselves and our strength; we would seek comfort in our own feeling, or our own works, and all becomes dark. As soon as we look to Jesus, to the fulness, to the perfect provision for our needs that is in Him, all is light. He says, `I am the Light: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.' So long as I believe, I have light and gladness. (John 12:36; 11:40; Rom. 15:13; 1 Pet. 1:8)

Christians, who would walk according to the will of the Lord, hear what His word says: `Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. Rejoice in the Lord always: again, I will say, Rejoice.' (Phil. 3:1; 4:3) In the Lord Jesus there is joy unspeakable, and full of glory: believing in Him, rejoice in this. Live the life of faith: that life is salvation and glorious joy. A heart that gives itself undividedly to follow Jesus, that lives by faith in Him and His love, shall have light and gladness. Therefore, soul, only believe. Do not seek gladness; in that case you will not find it,

because you are seeking feeling. But seek Jesus, follow Jesus, believe in Jesus, and gladness shall be added to you. `Not seeing, but believing, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

> Lord Jesus, Thou are the Light of the world, the Effulgence of the unapproachable light, in whom we see the light of God. From Thy countenance radiates upon us the illumination of the knowledge of the love and glory of God. And thou art ours, our light and our salvation. O teach us to believe more firmly that with Thee we can never walk in the darkness. Let gladness in Thee be the proof that Thou art all to us, and our strength to do all that Thou wouldst have us do. Amen.

1. The gladness that I have in anything is the measure of its worth in my eyes: the gladness in a person, the measure of my pleasure in him: the gladness in a work the measure of my pleasure in it. Gladness in God and His service is one of the surest tokens of healthy spiritual life.

2. Gladness is hindered by *ignorance,* when we do not rightly understand God and His love and the blessedness of His service: by *unbelief*, when we still seek something in our own strength or feeling: by *double-heartedness*, when we are not willing to give up and lay aside everything for Jesus.

3. Understand this saying: `He that seeks gladness shall not find it; he that seeks the Lord and His will, shall find gladness unsought.' Think over this. He that seeks gladness as a thing of feeling, seeks himself: he would fain be happy: he will not find it. He that forgets himself to live in the Lord and His will, shall be taught of himself to rejoice in the Lord. It is God, God Himself, who is the God of the gladness of our rejoicing: seek God, and you have gladness. You have then simply to take and enjoy it by faith.

4. To thank much for what God is and does, to believe much in what God says and will do, is the way to abiding gladness.

5. `The light of the eyes gladdens the heart.' God has not intended that His children should walk in the darkness. Satan is the prince of the darkness: God is light: Christ is the Light of the world: we are children of the light: let us walk in the light. Let us believe in the promise, `The Lord shall be to thee an everlasting light. Thy sun shall no more go down, for the Lord shall be to thee an everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XXXIII. CHASTISEMENT

`Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest out of Thy law; that Thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity.' -- Ps. 94:12
`Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now I observe Thy word. It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes.' -- Ps. 119:67,71
`He chastens us for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.' -- Heb. 12:10
`Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations; knowing that the proof of your faith worketh patience.' -- Jas. 1:2,3

Every child of God must at one time or another enter the school of trial. What the Scriptures teach us is confirmed by experience. And the Scriptures teach us further, that we are to count it a joy when God takes us into this school. It is a part of our heavenly blessedness to be educated and sanctified by the Father through chastisement.

Not that trial in itself brings a blessing. (Isa. 5:3; Hos. 7:14,15; 2 Cor. 7:10) Just as there is no profit in the ground's being made wet by rain or broken up by the plough, when no seed is cast into it, so there are children of God that enter into trial and have little blessing from it. The heart is softened for a time, but they know not how to obtain an abiding blessing from it. They know not what the Father has in view with them in the school of trial.

In a good school there are four things necessary -- a definite aim, a good text-book, a capable teacher, a willing pupil.

1. Let the aim of trial be clear to you. Holiness is the highest glory of the Father, and also of the child. He `chastens us for our profit that we may be partakers of *His Holiness*.' (Isa. 27:8,9; 1 Cor. 11:32; Heb. 2:10; 12:11) In trial the Christian would often have only comfort. Or he seeks to be quiet and contented under the special chastisement. This is indeed the beginning; but the Father desires something else, something higher. He would make him *holy, holy,* for his whole life. When Job said, `Blessed be the name of the Lord,' this was still but the beginning of his school-time: the Lord had still more to teach him. God would unite our will with His holy will, not only on the one point in which He is trying us, but in everything: God would fill us with His holy Spirit, with His holiness. This is the aim of God; this also must be your aim in the school of trial.

2. Let the word of God at this time be your reading book. See in our trials how in affliction God would teach us out of His law. The word will reveal to you why the Father chastens you, how deeply He loves you in the midst of it, and how rich are the promises of His consolation. Trial will give new glory to the promises of the Father. In chastisement have recourse to the word. (Ps. 119:49,50,92,143; Isa. 40:1; 43:2; 1 Thess. 4:8)

3. Let Jesus be your teacher. He Himself was sanctified by suffering: it was in suffering that He learned full obedience. He has a wonderfully sympathetic heart. Have much intercourse with Him. Seek not your comfort from much speaking on the part of men or with men. *Give Jesus the opportunity of teaching you.* Have much converse with Him in solitude. (Isa. 26:16; 61:1,2; Heb. 2:10,17,18; 5:9) The Father has given you the word, the Spirit, the Lord Jesus your sanctification, in order to sanctify you: affliction and chastisement are meant to bring you to the word, to Jesus Himself, in order that He may make you partaker of His holiness. It is in fellowship with Jesus that consolation comes as of itself (2 Cor. 1:3,4; Heb. 13:5,6)

4. Be a willing pupil. Acknowledge your ignorance. Think not that you understand the will of God. Ask and expect that the Lord would teach you the lesson that you are to learn in affliction. To the meek there is the

promise of teaching and wisdom. Seek to have the ear open, the heart very quiet, and turned towards God. Know that it is the Father that has placed you in the school of trial: yield yourself with all willingness to hear you taught. He will bless you greatly in this. (Ps. 25:9;39:2,10; Isa. 50:4,5)

`Happy is the man whom Thou chastenest, and teachest out of Thy law.' `Count it all joy when ye fall into manifold temptations,' `that ye may be perfect, lacking in nothing.' Regard the time of trial as a time of blessing, as a time of close converse with the Father, of being made partaker of His holiness, and you shall also rejoicingly say: `It is good for me that I have been afflicted.'

> Father, what thanks shall I express to Thee for the glorious light that Thy word casts upon the dark trials of this life. Thou wilt by this means teach me, and make me partaker of Thy holiness. Hast Thou considered the suffering and the death of Thy beloved Son not too much to bring holiness near to me, and shall I not be willing to endure Thy chastisement to be partaker of it? No: Father, thanks be unto Thee for Thy precious work: only fulfil Thy counsel in me. Amen.

1. In chastisement it is first of all necessary that we should be possessed by the thought: This is the will of God. Although the trial comes through our own folly or the perversity of men, we must acknowledge that it is the will of God that we should be in that suffering by means of that folly or perversity. We see this clearly in Joseph and the Lord Jesus. Nothing will give us rest but the willing acknowledgment: this is the will of God.

2. The second thought is: God wills not only the trial, but also the consolation, the power, and the blessing in it. He who acknowledges the will of God in the chastisement itself is on the way to see and experience the accompaniments also as the will of God.

3. The will of God is as perfect as He Himself: let us not be afraid to surrender ourselves to it: no one suffers loss by deeming the will of God unconditionally good.

4. This is holiness: to know and to adore the will of God, to unite one's self wholly with it.

5. Pray, seek not comfort in trial in connection with men. Do not mingle too much with them: see to it rather that you deal with God and His word. The object of trial is just to draw you away from what is earthly, in order that you may turn to God and give Him time to unite your will with His perfect will.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XXXIV. PRAYER

`Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee.' -- Matt. 6:6

The spiritual life with its growth depends in great measure on prayer. According as I pray much or little, pray with pleasure or as a duty, pray according to the word of God or my own inclination, will my life flourish or decay. In the word of Jesus quoted above, we have the leading ideas of true prayer.

Alone with God: that is the first thought. The door must be shut, with the world and man outside, because I am to have converse with God undisturbed. When God met with His servants in the olden time, He took them alone. (Gen. 28:22,23; 22:5; 32:24; Ex. 33:11) Let the first thought in your prayer be: here are God and I in the chamber with each other. According to your conviction of the nearness of God will be the power of your prayer.

In the presence of *your Father*: this is the second thought. You come to the inner chamber, because your Father with His love awaits you there. Although you are cold, dark, sinful; although it is doubtful whether you can pray at all; come, because the Father is there, and there looks upon you. Set yourself beneath the light of his eye. Believe in His tender fatherly love, and out of this faith prayer will be born. (Matt. 6:8; 7:11)

Count certainly upon an answer: that is the third point in the word of Jesus. `Your Father will recompense you openly.' There is nothing about which the Lord Jesus has spoken so positively as the certainty of an answer to prayer. Pray, review the promises. (Matt 6:7,8; 11:24; Luke 28:8; John 14:13,14; 15:7,16; 16:23,24) Observe how constantly in the Psalms, that prayer-book of God's saints, God is called upon as the God who hears prayer and gives answers. (Ps. 3:5; 4:4; 6:10; 10:17; 27:6,22,25; 20:2,7,10; 34:5,7,18; 38:16; 40:2; 65:3; 66:19)

It may be that there is much in you that prevents the answer. Delay in the answer is a very blessed discipline. It leads to self-searching as to whether we are praying amiss, and whether our life is truly in harmony with our prayer. It rouses to a purer exercise of faith. (Josh. 7:12; 1 Sam. 8:18; 14:37,38; 28:6,15; Prov. 21:13; Isa. 1:15; Mic. 3:4; Hag. 1:9; Jas. 1:6; 4:3; 5:16) It conducts to a closer and more persistent converse with God. The sure confidence of an answer is the secret of powerful praying. Let this always be with us the chief thing in prayer. When you pray, stop in the midst of your prayer to ask, Do I believe that I am receiving what I pray for? Let your faith receive and hold fast the answer as given: it shall turn out according to your faith. (Ps. 145:9; Isa. 30:19; Jer. 33:3; Mal. 3:10; Matt. 9:29; 15:28; 1 John 3:22; 5:14,15)

Beloved young Christians, if there is one thing about which you must be conscientious, it is this: secret converse with God. Your life is hid with Christ in God. Every day must you in prayer ask from above, and by faith receive in prayer what you need for that day. Every day must personal intercourse with the Father and the Lord Jesus be renewed and strengthened. God is our salvation and our strength: Christ is our life and our holiness: only in personal fellowship with the living God is our blessedness found.

Christian, pray much, pray continually, pray without ceasing. When you have no desire to pray, *go just then to the inner chamber*. Go as one who has nothing to bring to the Father, to set yourself before Him in faith in His love. That coming to the Father, and abiding before Him, is already a prayer that He understands. Be assured that to appear before God, however passively, always brings a blessing. The Father not only hears: He sees in secret, and He will recompense it openly.

> O my Father, who hast so certainly promised in Thy word to hear the prayer of faith, give to me the Spirit of prayer, that I may know how to offer that prayer. Graciously reveal to me Thy wonderful Fatherly love, the complete blotting out of my sins in Christ, by which every hindrance in this direction is taken away, and the intercession of the Spirit in me, by which my ignorance or weakness cannot deprive me of the blessing. Teach me with faith in Thee, the Three-One, to pray in fellowship with Thee. And confirm me in the strong living certitude that I receive what I believingly ask. Amen.

1. In prayer the principal thing is faith. The whole of salvation, the whole of the new life is by faith, therefore also by prayer. There is all too much prayer that brings nothing, because there is little faith in it. Before I pray, and while I pray, and after I have prayed, I must ask: Do I pray in faith? I must say: I believe with my whole heart.

2. To arrive at this faith we must take time in prayer: time to set ourselves silently and trustfully before God, and to become awake to His presence: time to have our soul sanctified in fellowship with God: time for the Holy Spirit to teach us to hold fast and use trustfully the word of promise. No earthly knowledge, no earthly possessions, no earthly food, no intercourse with friends, can we have without time, sufficient time. Let us not think to learn how to pray, how to enjoy the power and the blessedness of prayer, if we do not take time with God.

3. And then there must be not only time every day, but perseverance from day to day. Time is required to grow in the certitude that we are acceptable to the Father, and that our prayer has power, in the confidence which knows that our prayer is according to His will and is heard. We must not suppose that we know well enough how to pray, and can but ask, and then it is over. No: prayer is converse and fellowship with God, in which God has time and opportunity to work in us, in which our souls die to their own will and power, and become bound up and united with God.

4. For encouragement in persistent prayer, the following instance may be of service. In an address delivered at Calcutta, George Muller recently said that in 1844 five persons were laid upon his heart, and that he began to pray for their conversion. Eighteen months passed by before the first was converted. He prayed five years more, when the second was converted. After twelve years and a half, yet another was converted. And now he also already prayed forty years for the other two, without letting slip a single day; and still they are not converted. He was, nevertheless, full of courage in the sure confidence that these two also would be given him in answer to his prayer.

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XXXV. THE PRAYER MEETING

`Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.' -- Matt. 28:19,20

The Lord Jesus has told us to go into the inner chamber and hold our personal converse with God by prayer in secret, and not to be seen of men. The very same voice tells us that we are also to pray in fellowship with one another. (Matt. 6:6; Luke 9:18,28) And when He went to heaven, the birth of the Christian Church took place in a prayer meeting which one hundred and twenty men and women held for ten days. (Acts. 1:14) The Day of Pentecost was the fruit of unanimous persevering prayer. Let every one who would please the Lord Jesus, who desires the gift of the Spirit with power for his congregation or Church, who would have the blessing of fellowship with the children of God, attached himself to a prayer meeting, and prove the Lord whether He will make good His word and bestow upon it a special blessing. (2 Chron. 20:4,17; Neh. 9:2,3; Joel 2:16,17; Acts. 12:5) And let him give help in it, so that the prayer meeting may be such as the Lord presented it to us.

For a blessed prayer-meeting, there must be, first of all, agreement concerning the thing which we desire. There must be something that we really desire to have from God; and concerning this we are to be in harmony. There must be inner love and unity amongst the suppliants, -- all that is strife, envy, wrath, lovelessness, makes prayer powerless, (Ps. 133:1,3; Jer. 58:4; Matt. 5:23,24; Mark. 11:25) -- and then agreement on the definite object that is desired. (Jer. 32:39; Acts. 4:24) For this end it is entirely proper that what people are to pray for should be stated in the prayer meeting. Whether it be that one of the members would have his particular needs brought forward, or whether others would bring more general needs to the Lord, such as the conversion of the unconverted, the revival of God's children, the anointing of the teacher, the extension of the kingdom, let the objects be announced beforehand. And let no one then suppose that there is unanimity whenever one is content to join in prayer for these objects. No: we are to take them into our heart and life, bring them continually before the Lord, be inwardly eager that the Lord should give them: then we are on the way to the prayer that has power.

The second feature that characterizes a right prayer meeting is the coming together in the name of Jesus and the consciousness of His presence. The Scripture says, `The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.' (Prov. 18:10) * The name is the expression of the person. When they come together, believers are to enter into the name of Jesus, to betake themselves within this name as their fortress and abode. In this name they mingle with one another before the Father, and out of this name they pray: this name makes them also truly one with each other. And when they are thus in this name, the living Lord Himself is in their midst: and He says that this is the reason why the Father certainly hears them. (John 14:13,14; 15:7,16; 16:23,24) They are in Him, and He is in them, and out of Him they pray, and their prayer comes before the Father in His power. O let the name of Jesus be really the point of union, the meeting place, in our prayer meetings, and we shall be conscious that He is in our midst.

Then there is the third feature of united prayer of which the Lord has told us: our request shall certainly be done of the Heavenly Father. The prayer shall certainly be answered. O we may well cry out in these days, `Where is the God of Elijah?' for He was a God that answered. `The God that shall answer, He shall be God,' said Elijah to the people. And he said to God, `Answer me, Lord; answer me; that this people may acknowledge that Thou, O Lord, art God.' (1 Chron. 18:24,37; Jas. 5:16) When we are content with much praying, with continuous

praying, without answer, then there will be little answer given. But when we understand that the answer as the token of God's pleasure in our prayer is the principal thing, and are not willing to be content without it, we shall discover what is lacking in our prayer, and shall set ourselves so to pray that an answer may come. And this surely we may firmly believe: the Lord takes delight in answering. It is a joy to Him when His people so enter into the name of Jesus, and pray out of it, that He can give what they desire. (Acts. 12:5; 2 Cor. 1:11; Jas. 4:8; 5:16,17)

Children of God, however young and weak you may still be, here is one of the institutions prepared for you by the Lord Jesus Himself to supply you with help in prayer. Let every one make use of the prayer meeting. Let every one go in a praying and believing frame of mind, seeking the name and the presence of the Lord. Let every one seek to live and pray with his brethren and sisters. And let every one expect surely to see glorious answers to prayer.

> Blessed Lord Jesus, who hast given us commandment to pray, as well in the solitary inner chamber as in public fellowship with one another, let the one habit always make the other more precious as complement and confirmation. Let the inner chamber prepare us, and awaken the need for union with Thy people in prayer. Let Thy presence there be our blessedness. And let fellowship with Thy people strengthen us surely to expect and receive answers. Amen.

1. There are many places of our country where prayer meetings might be a great blessing. A pious man or woman who should once a week or on Sabbath at mid-day gather together the inhabitants on a farm-place or the neighbours of two or three places that are not far from one another, might be able to obtain great blessing. Let every believing reader of this portion inquire if there does not exist in his neighbourhood some such need, and let him make a beginning in the name of the Lord. Let me therefore earnestly put the question to every reader: Is there a prayer-meeting in your district? Do you faithfully take part in it? Do you know what it is to come together with the children of God in the name of Jesus, to experience His presence and His hearing of prayer?

2. There is a book, `The Hour of Prayer,' with suitable portions for reading out in such gatherings. Or let this book, `The New Life,' be taken, a portion read, and some of the texts reviewed and spoken upon: this will give material for prayer.

3. `Will the prayer meeting do no harm to the inner chamber?' is a question sometimes asked. My experience is just the reverse of this result. The prayer meeting is a school of prayer. The weak learn from more advanced petitioners. Material for prayer is given: opportunity for self-searching; encouragement to more prayer.

4. Would that it were more general in prayer meetings for people to speak of definite objects for which to pray; things in which one can definitely and trustfully look out for an answer, and concerning which one can know when an answer comes. Such announcements would greatly further unanimity and believing expectations.

* The Dutch version has -- `and is set in a high room.' -- Translator

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XXXVI. THE FEAR OF THE LORD

`Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings. His heart is established, he shall not be afraid.' -- Ps. 112:1,7,8

`So the Church, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, was multiplied.' -- Acts 9:31

The Scriptures use the word `fear' in a twofold way. In some places it speaks of `fear' as something wrong and sinful, and in the strongest terms it forbids us to `fear.' (Gen. 15:1; Isa. 8:13; Jer. 32:40; Rom. 8:15; 1 Pet. 3:14; 1 John 4:18) In well-nigh one hundred places occurs the word: `Fear not.' In many other places, on the contrary, fear is praised as one of the surest tokens of true godliness, acceptable to the Lord, and fruitful of blessing to us. (Ps. 22:24,26; 33:18; 112:1; 115:13; Prov. 28:14) The people of God bear the name: those that fear the Lord. The distinction betwixt these two lies in this simple fact: the one is unbelieving fear, the other is believing. Where fear is found connected with lack of trust in God, there it is sinful and very hurtful. (Matt. 8:26; Rev. 21:9) The fear, on the other hand, that is coupled with trust and hope in God, is for the spiritual life entirely indispensable. The fear that has man and what is temporal for its object, is condemned. The fear that with childlike confidence and love honours the Father, is commanded. (Ps. 33:18; 147:11; Luke 12:4,7) It is the believing, not slavish, but filial, fear of the Lord that is presented by the Scriptures as a source of blessing and power. He that fears the Lord will fear nothing else. The fear of the Lord will be the beginning of all wisdom. The fear of the Lord is the sure way to the enjoyment of God's favour and protection. (Ps. 56:5,12; Prov. 1:7; 9:10; 10:27; 19:23; Acts. 9:31; 2 Cor. 7:1)

There are some Christians who by their upbringing are led into the fear of the Lord, even before they come to faith. This is a very great blessing: parents can give a child no greater blessing than to bring him up in the fear of the Lord. When those who are thus brought up are brought to faith, they have a great advantage: they are, as it were, prepared to walk in the joy of the Lord. When, on the contrary, others that have not this preparation, come to conversion, they have need of special teaching and vigilance, in order to pray for and awaken this holy fear.

The elements of which this fear is composed are many and glorious. The principal are the following: --

There are holy reverence and awe before the glorious majesty of God and before the All Holy. These guard against the superficiality that forgets who God is, and that takes no pains to honour Him as God. (Job 42:6; Ps. 5:8; Isa. 6:2,5; Hab. 2:20; Zech. 2:3)

There is deep humility that is afraid of itself, and couples deep confidence in God with an entire distrust in itself. Conscious weakness that knows the subtlety of its own heart always dreads doing anything contrary to the will or honour of God. But just because he fears God, such an one firmly reckons on Him for protection. And this same humility inspires him in all his intercourse with his fellow-men. (Luke 18:2,4; Rom. 11:20; 1 Pet. 3:5)

There is circumspectness or vigilance. With holy forethought, it seeks to know the right path, to watch against the enemy, and to be guarded against all lightness or hastiness in speech, resolve, and conduct. (Prov. 2:5,11; 8:12,13; 13:33; 16:6; Luke 1:74)

And there are also in it holy zeal and courage in watching and striving. The fear of displeasing the Lord by not conducting one's self in everything as His servant, incites to being faithful in that which is least. The fear of the Lord takes all other fear away, and gives inconceivable courage in the certitude of victory. (Deut. 6:2; Isa. 12:2)

And out of this fear is then born joy. `Rejoice with trembling:' the fear of the Lord gives joy its depth and stability. Fear is the root, joy the fruit: the deeper the fear, the higher the joy. On this account it is said: `Ye that

fear the Lord praise Him;' `Ye that fear the Lord, bless the Lord.' (Ps. 22:24; 135:20)

Young disciples of Christ, hear the voice of your Father, `Fear the Lord, ye His saints.' Let deep fear of the Lord and dread of all that might displease or grieve Him, fill you. Then shall you never have any evil to fear. He that fears the Lord and seeks to do all that pleases Him, for him shall God also do all that he desires. The childlike believing fear of God will lead you into the love and joy of God, while slavish, unbelieving, cowardly fear is utterly cast out.

> O my God, unite my heart for the fear of Thy name. May I always be amongst those that fear the Lord, that hope in His mercy. Amen.

1. What are some of the blessings of the fear of God? (Ps. 31:20; 115:13; 127:11; 145:19; Prov. 1, 7,8,13,14,27; Acts 10:35)
2. What are the reasons why we are to fear God? (Deut. 10:17,20,21; Josh. 4:24; 1 Sam. 12:24; Jer. 5:22; 10:6,7; Matt. 10:28; Rev. 15:4)
3. It is especially the knowledge of God in His greatness, power, and glory that will fill the soul with fear. But for this end, we must set ourselves silent before Him, and take time for our soul to come under the impression of His majesty.
4. `He delivered me from all my fears.' Does this apply to every different sort of fear by which you are hindered? There is the fear of man (Isa. 41:12,13; Heb 13:16); the fear of heavy trial (Isa. 40:1,2); the fear of our own weakness (Isa. 41:10); fear for the work of God (1 Chron. 28:20); the fear of death (Ps. 23:4).
5. Do you now understand the word: `Blessed is the man that fears the Lord. His heart is established, he shall not be afraid'?

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XXXVII. UNDIVIDED CONSECRATION

`And Ittai answered, As the Lord liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether for death or for life, even there also will thy servant be.' -- 2 Sam. 15:21

`Whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple.' -- Luke 14:33

`Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be to you a Father.' -- 2 Cor. 6:17,18

`Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for Christ Jesus my Lord.' -- Phil. 3:8

We have already said that surrender to the Lord is something that for the Christian always obtains newer and deeper significance. When this takes place, he comes to understand how this surrender involves nothing less than a complete and undivided consecration to live only, always, wholly for Jesus. as entirely as the temple was dedicated to the service of God alone, so that every one knew that it existed only for that purpose; as entirely as the offering on the altar could be used only according to the command of God, and no one had a right to dispose of one portion of it otherwise than God had said: so entirely do you belong to your Lord, and so undivided must your consecration to Him be. God continually reminded Israel that He had redeemed them to be His possession. (Ex. 19:4,5; Lev. 1:8,9; Deut. 7:6; Rom. 12:1; 1 Cor. 3:16,17) Let us see what this implies.

There is *personal attachment to Jesus*, and intercourse with Him in secret. He will be, He must be, the beloved, the desire, the joy of our souls. It is not, in the first instance, to the service of God, but to Jesus as our Friend and King, our Redeemer and God, that we are to be consecrated. (John 14:21; 15:14,15; 21:17; Gal. 2:10) It is only the spiritual impulse of a personal cordial love that can set us in a condition for a life of complete consecration. Continually did Jesus use the words: `For My sake,' `Follow Me,' `My disciple'; He Himself must be the central point. (Matt. 10:32,33,37,38,40: Luke 14:26,27,33; 18:22) He gave Himself: to desire to have Him, to love, to depend on Him, is the characteristic of a disciple.

Then there is *public confession.* What has been given to any one, that he will have acknowledged by all as his property. His possessions are his glory. When the Lord Jesus manifests His great grace to a soul in redeeming it, He desires that the world should see and know it: He would be known and honoured as its proprietor. He desires that every one that belongs to Him should confess Him, and that it should come out that Jesus is King. (Ex. 33:16; Josh. 24:15; John 13:35) Apart from this public confession, the surrender is but a half-hearted one. As a part of this public confession, it is also required that we should join His people and acknowledge them as our people. The one new commandment that the Lord gave, the sure token by which all should recognize that we are His disciples, is brotherly love. Although the children of God in a locality are few, or despised, or full of imperfection, yet do you join them. Love them: hold intercourse with them. Attach yourself to them in prayer meetings and otherwise. Love them fervently: brotherly love has wonderful power to open the heart for the love and the indwelling of God. (Ruth 1:16; John 15:12; Rom. 7:5; 1 Cor. 12:2021; Eph. 4:14,16; 1 Pet. 1:22)

To complete consecration, there also belongs separation from sin and the world. Touch not the unclean thing. Know that the world is under the power of the Evil One. Ask not how much of it you can retain without being lost. Ask not always what is sin and what is lawful. Even of that which is lawful, the Christian must oftentimes make a willing renunciation, in order to be able to live wholly for his God. (1 Cor. 8:13; 9:25,27; 10:23; 2 Cor. 6:16,17; 2 Tim. 2:4) Abstinence even from lawful things is often indispensable for the full imitation of the Lord Jesus. Live as one who is really separated for God and His holiness. He who renounces everything, who counts

everything loss for Jesus' sake, shall even in this life receive an hundredfold. (Gen. 22:16,17; 2 Chron. 25:9; Luke 18:29; John 12:24,25; Phil. 3:8)

And what I separate from everything, I will use. Entire consecration has its eye upon making us useful and fit for God and His service. Let there not be with you the least doubt as to whether God has need of you, and will make you a great blessing. Only give yourself unreservedly into His hands. Present yourself to Him, that He may fill you with His blessing, His love, His Spirit: you shall be a blessing. (2 Tim. 2:21)

Let no one fear that this demand for a complete consecration is too high for him. You are not under the law which demands, but gives no power. You are under grace, which itself works what it requires. (2 Cor. 9:8; 2 Thess. 1:11,12) Like the first surrender, so is every fresh dedication yielded to this Jesus, whom the Father has given to do all things for you. Consecration is a deed of faith, a part of the glorious life of faith. It is on this account that you have to say: It is not I, but the grace of God in me, that will do it. I live only by faith in Him who works in me as well the willing as the performance. (1 Cor. 15:10; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 2:13)

> Blessed Lord, open the eyes of my heart that I may see how completely Thou wouldst have me for Thyself. Be Thou in the hidden depths of my heart the one power that keeps me occupied, and holds me in possession. Let all know of me that Thou art my King, that I ask only for Thy will. In my separation from the world, in my surrender to Thy people and to Thy will, let it be manifest that I am wholly, yea, wholly, the Lord's. Amen.

1. There is well-nigh no point of the Christian life in connection with which I should more desire to urge you to pray to God that He may enlighten your eyes, than this of the entire consecration that God desires. In myself and others, I discover that with our own thoughts we can form no conception how completely God Himself would take possession of our will and live in us. The Holy Spirit must reveal this in us. Only then indeed does a conviction arise of how little we understand this. We are not to think: I see truly how entirely I must live for God, but I cannot accomplish this: no, we are to say: I am still blind, I have still no view of what is the glory of a life in which God is all: if I should once see that, I would strongly desire and believe that, not I, but God, should work it in me.

2. Let there not be in your mind the least doubt as to whether you have given yourself to God, to live wholly and only as His. Express this conviction often before Him. Acknowledge that you do not yet see or understand what it means, but abide by this, that you desire it to be so. Reckon on the Holy Spirit to seal you, to stamp you as God's entire possession. Even if you stumble and discover self-will, hold fast your integrity, and trustfully aver that the deep, firm choice of your heart is in all things, in all things, to live to God.

3. Keep always before your eyes that the power to give all to the Lord, and to be all for the Lord, arises from the fact that He has given all for you, that He is all for you. Faith in what He did for you is the power of what you do for Him.

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by Andrew Murray

XXXVIII. ASSURANCE OF FAITH

`Looking unto the promise of God, Abraham wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform.' -- Rom. 4:20,21

`My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth. Hereby shall we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our heart before Him.' -- 1 John 3:18,19

`And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He gave us.' -- 1 John 3:24

Every child of God has need of the assurance of faith: the full certitude of faith that the Lord has received him and made him His child. The Holy Scripture always speaks to Christians as those that know that they are redeemed, that they are now children of God, and that they have received eternal life. (Deut. 26:27,28; Isa. 44:5; Gal. 4:7; 1 John 5:12) How, pray, can a child love or serve his father, while he is uncertain whether his father will really acknowledge him as a child? We have already spoken on this point in a previous chapter; but oftentimes by ignorance or distrust a Christian again comes into darkness: for this reason we will now deal with it once again of set purpose.

Scripture names three things by which we have our certitude: first, *faith* in the word; after that, *works;* and then, in and with both of these, *the Holy Spirit.*

First, faith in the word. Abraham is to us the great exemplar of faith, and also of the assurance of faith. And what then says the Scripture about the certitude that he had? He was fully assured that what God had promised He was able also to perform. His expectation was only from God, and what God had promised. He relied upon God to do what He had said: the promise of God was for him his only but sufficient assurance of faith. (John 3:33, 5:24; Acts. 27:25; Rom. 4:21,22; 1 John 5:10,11)

There are many young Christians who think that faith in the word is not sufficient to give full certitude: they would fain have something more. They imagine that assurance, a sure inward feeling or conviction, is what is given above or outside of faith This is wrong. As I have need of nothing more than the word of a trustworthy man to give me complete certitude, so must the word of God be my certitude. People err because they seek something in themselves and in their feeling. No: the whole of salvation comes from God: the soul must not be occupied with itself or its work, but with God: he that forgets himself to hear what God says, and to rely upon His promise as something worthy of credit, has in this fact the fullest assurance of faith. (Num. 23:19; Ps. 89:35) He does not doubt the promises, but is strong in faith, giving God the glory, and being fully assured that what was promised God is also able to perform.

Then the Scripture names also works: by unfeigned love we shall assure our hearts. (1 John 3:18,19) Here carefully observe this: assurance by faith in the promise, without works, comes first. The godless man who receives grace knows this only from the word. But then, later on, assurance is to follow from works. `By works was faith made perfect.' (John 15:10,14: Gal. 5:6; Jas. 2:22; 1 John 3:14) The tree is planted in faith; without fruits. But when the time of fruit arrives, and no fruit appears, then I may doubt. The more clearly I at the outset hold the assurance of faith, without works, on the word alone, the more certainly shall works follow.

And both -- assurance by faith and by works -- come by the Spirit. Not by the word alone, and not by works as something that I myself do, but by the word as the instrument of the Spirit, and by works as the fruit of the Spirit, has a child of God the heavenly certification that he is the Lord's. (John 4:13; Rom. 8:13,14; 1 John 3:24)

O let us believe in Jesus as our life, and abide in Him, and assurance of faith shall never be lacking to us.

> O my Father, teach me to find my assurance of faith in a life with Thee, in cordial reliance upon Thy promises, and in cordial obedience to Thy commands. Let Thy Holy Spirit also witness with my spirit that I am a child of God. Amen.

1. The importance of the assurance of faith lies in the fact, that I cannot possibly love or serve as a child a God of whom I do not know whether He loves and acknowledges me as His child.

2. The whole Bible is one great proof for the assurance of faith. Just because it thus speaks of itself, it is not always named. Abraham and Moses knew well that God had received them: otherwise they could not serve or trust Him. Israel knew that God had redeemed them: for this reason they had to serve God. How much more must this be the case in the greater redemption of the New Testament? All the Epistles are written to men of whom it is presupposed that they know and confess that they are redeemed, holy children of God.

3. Faith and obedience are inseparable, as root and fruit. First, there must be the root, and the root must have time without fruits; then later on come surely the fruits: first assurance without fruits by living faith in the word; then, further assurance from fruits. It is in a life with Jesus that assurance of faith is exalted firmly above all doubt.

4. Assurance of faith is much helped by confession. What I express becomes from me more evident; I am bound and confirmed by it.

5. It is at the feet of Jesus, looking up into His friendly countenance, listening to His loving promises, it is in intercourse with Jesus Himself in prayer, that all doubtfulness of mind falls away. Go thither for the full assurance of faith.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XXXIX. CONFORMITY TO JESUS

`Foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son.' -- Rom. 8:29
`I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you.' -- John 13:15

The Bible speaks of a twofold conformity, a twofold likeness that we bear. We may be conformed to the world or to Jesus. The one excludes and drives out the other. Conformity to Jesus, where it is sought, will be secretly prevented by conformity to the world more than anything else. And conformity to the world can be overcome by nothing but conformity to Jesus.

Young Christian, the new life of which you have become partaker is the life of God in heaven. In Christ that life is revealed and made visible. What the workings and fruits of eternal life were in Jesus, they shall also be in you: in His life you get to see what eternal life will work in you. It cannot be otherwise: if for this end you surrender yourself unreservedly to Jesus and the dominion of eternal life, it will bring forth in you a walk of wonderful conformity to that of Jesus. (Matt. 20:27,28; Luke 6:40; John 6:57; 1 John 2:6; 4:17)

To the true imitation of Jesus in His example and growth in inward conformity to Him, two things especially are necessary. These are a *clear insight* that I am really called to this, and *a firm trust* that it is possible for me.

One of the greatest hindrances in the spiritual life is that we do not know, that we do not see, what God desires that we should be. (Matt. 22:19; Luke 24:16; 1 Cor. 3:1,2; Heb. 5:11,12) Our understanding is still so little enlightened, we have still so many of our own human thoughts and imaginations about the true service of God, we know so little of waiting for the Spirit who alone can teach us. We do not acknowledge that even the clearest words of God do not have for us the meaning and power that God desires. And so long as we do not spiritually discern what likeness to Jesus is, and how utterly we are called to live like Him, there can be but little said of true conformity. Would that we could only conceive our need of a special heavenly instruction on this point. (1 Cor. 2:12,13; Eph. 1:17,18)

Let us for this end earnestly examine the Scriptures in order to know what God says and desires about our conformity to Christ. (John 13:15; 15:10,12; 27:18; Eph. 5:2; Phil. 2:5; Col. 3:18) Let us unceasingly ponder such words of Scripture, and keep our heart in contact with them. Let it remain fixed with us that we have given ourselves wholly to the Lord, to be all that He desires. And let us trustfully pray that the Holy Spirit would inwardly enlighten us and bring us to a full view of the life of Jesus so far as that can be seen in a believer. (1 Cor. 11:1; 2 Cor. 3:18) The Spirit will convince us that we, no less than Jesus, are absolutely called to live only for the will and glory of the Father: to be in the world even as He is.

The other thing that we have need of is the belief that it is really possible for us with some measure of exactness to bear the image of our Lord. Unbelief is the cause of impotence. We put this matter otherwise. Because we are powerless, we think we dare not believe that we can be conformed to our Lord. This thought is in conflict with the word of God. We do not have it in our own power to carry ourselves after the image of Jesus. No: He is our head and our life. He dwells in us, and will have His life work from within, outwards, with divine power, through the Holy Spirit. (John 14:23; 2 Cor. 13:3; Eph. 3:17,18)

Yet this cannot be apart from our faith. Faith is the consent of the heart, the surrender to Him to work, the reception of His working. `Be it unto you according to your faith,' is one of the fundamental laws of the kingdom of God. (Zech. 8:6; Matt 8:29; Luke 1:37,45; 28:27; Gal. 2:20) It is something incredible what a power unbelief has to hinder the working and the blessing of the Almighty God. The Christian who would be partaker of

conformity to Christ must specially cherish the firm trust that this blessing is within his reach, is entirely within the range of possibility. He must learn to look to Jesus as Him to whom he by the grace of God Almighty can, in his measure, be really conformable. He must believe that the same Spirit that was in Jesus is also in him; that the same Father that led and strengthened Jesus also watches over him; that the same Jesus that lived on earth now lives in him. He must cherish the strong assurance that this Three-One God is at work in changing him into the image of the Son. (John 14:19; 17:19; Rom. 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 1:19,10)

He that believes this shall receive it. It will not be without much prayer: it will require especially converse, ceaseless intercourse with God and Jesus. Yet he that desires it and is willing to give time and sacrifice to it, certainly receives it.

> Son of God, Effulgence of the glory of God, the very image of His substance, I must be changed into Thine image. In Thee I see the image and the likeness of God in which we are created, in which we are by Thee created anew. Lord Jesus, let conformity to Thee be the one desire, the one hope of my soul. Amen.

1. Conformity to Jesus: we think that we understand the word: but how little do we comprehend that God really expects we should live even as Jesus. It requires much time with Him, in prayer and pondering of His example, at all rightly to conceive it. The writer of these precepts has written a book on this theme, has often spoken of it, and yet he sometimes feels as if he must cry out: Is it really true? Has God indeed called us to live even as Jesus?

2. `Like Jesus: Thoughts on the image of the Son of God and our conformity to Him,' is the title of a book in which the various features of the image of Jesus and the sure way of receiving them are set forth.

3. Conformity to the world is strengthened especially by intercourse with it: It is in intercourse with Jesus that we shall adopt His mode of thinking, His disposition, His manners.

4. The chief feature of the life of Jesus is this: He surrendered Himself wholly to the Father in behalf of men. This is the chief feature of conformity to Him: the offering up of ourselves to God for the redemption and blessing of the lost.

5. The chief feature His inner disposition was -- childlikeness: absolute dependence on the Father, great willingness to be taught, cheerful preparedness to do the will of the Father. Be specially like Him in this.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XL. CONFORMITY TO THE WORLD

`I beseech you, brethren, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God. And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.' -- Rom. 12:1,2

Be not conformed to this world. But what is conformity to the world? The opposite of conformity to Jesus: for Jesus and the world stand directly opposed to each other. The world crucified Him. He and His disciples are not of the world. The spirit of this world cannot receive the Spirit of God, for it sees Him not and knows Him not. (John 14:17; 17:14,16; 1 Cor. 2:6,8)

And what is the spirit of this world? The spirit of this world is the disposition that animates mankind in their natural condition, where the Spirit of God has not yet renewed them. The spirit of this world comes from the Evil One, who is the prince of this world, and has dominion over all that are not renewed by the Spirit of God. (John 14:30; 16:11; 1 Cor. 2:12)

And in what does the spirit of this world, or conformity to it, manifest itself? The word of God gives the answer: `All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.' The craving for pleasure or the desire to enjoy the world; the craving for property, or the desire to possess the world; the craving for glory, or the desire to be honoured in the world: these are the three chief forms of the spirit of the world. (1 John 2:15,16)

And these three are one in root and essence. The spirit of this world is, that man makes himself his own end: he makes himself the central point of the world: all creation, so far as he has power over it, must serve him; he seeks his life in the visible. This is the spirit of the world: to seek one's self and the visible. (John 5:44) And the Spirit of Jesus: to live not for one's self and not for the visible, but for God and the things that are invisible. (2 Cor. 4:18; 5:7,15)

It is a very terrible and serious thought that once can carry on a busy fashionable life, free from manifest sin or unrighteousness, and yet remain in the friendship of the world, and thereby in enmity against God. (Jas. 4:4)

Where the care for the earthly, for what we eat and what we should drink, for what we possess or may still get into possession, for what we can have brought forth in the earth and made to increase, is the chief element in our life, there we are conformed to this world. It is a terrible and a very serious thought that one can maintain to all appearance a Christian life and think that one is trusting in Christ, while yet one is living with the world for self and the visible. (Matt. 6:32,33) For this reason the command comes to all Christians with great emphasis: Be conformed, not to this world, but to Jesus.

And how can I, for this end, come to be not conformed to the world? Read our text over again with consideration: we read there two things. Observe what goes before. It is those that have presented their bodies to God as a sacrifice on the altar that have it said to them: Be not conformed to the world. Offer yourself to God -- that is conformity to Jesus; live every day as one that is offered up to God, crucified in Christ to the world: then you shall not be conformed to the world. (Gal. 6:14)

Observe also what follows: Be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the perfect will of God. There must be a continuous growing renewal of our mind. This takes place by the Holy Spirit, when we let ourselves be led by Him. Then we learn to judge spiritually of what is according to the will of God and what is according to the spirit of the world. A Christian who strives after the progressive renewal of his

whole mind shall not be conformed to the world: the Spirit of God makes him conformed to Jesus. (2 Cor. 6:14,16; Eph. 5:17; Heb. 5:14)

Christians, pray, do believe that Jesus has obtained for you the power to overcome the world, with its deep hidden seductions to living for ourselves. Believe this: believe in Him as Victor: and you also have the victory. (John 16:33; 1 John 5:4,5)

> Precious Lord, we have presented ourselves to Thee as living sacrifices. We have offered up ourselves to God. We are not of the world, even as Thou art not of the world. Lord, let our mind be enlightened by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, that we may rightly see what the spirit of this world is. And let it be seen in us that we are not of this world, but are conformed to Jesus. Amen.

1. Worldly pleasures. Is dancing sin? What harm is there in playing billiards? Why may a Christian not go to the play? One has sometimes wished that there were in the Scriptures a distinct law to forbid such things. God has intentionally not given this. If there were such a law, it would make men only externally pious. God would put each one upon trial whether his inner disposition is worldly or heavenly. Pray, learn Rom. 12:1,2 by heart, and ask the Spirit of God to make it living in you. The Christian who offers himself up to God, and becomes transformed by the renewing of the mind to prove the perfect will of God, will speedily learn whether he may dance or play billiards. The Christian who is afraid only of hell, but not of conformity to the world, cannot see what the Spirit of God gives His children to see.

2. It is remarkable that the trinity of the god of this world, in John's Epistle, is seen as well in the temptation in Paradise as in that of the Lord Jesus.

The lust of the flesh:

The woman saw that the tree was good for food.

Command that those stones become bread.

The lust of the eyes:

And that it was a delight to the eyes.

The devil showeth Him all the kingdoms of the world.

And the vainglory of life.

And that the tree was to be desired to make one wise.

Cast Thyself down.

3. Consider what I say to you: It is only conformity to Jesus that will keep out conformity to the world. Let conformity to Jesus be the study, the endeavour of your soul.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XLI. THE LORD'S DAY

`And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it: because that in it He rested from all His work which God had created.' -- Gen. 2:3

`On that day, the first day of the week, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.' -- John 20:19

`I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.' -- Rev. 1:10

Man abides under the law of time. He must have time for what he would do or obtain. In a wonderful way God gives him time for intercourse with Himself. One day in seven God separated for fellowship with Himself.

The great object of God's gift of this day is said to be, that it may serve as a token that God desires to sanctify man. (Ex. 31:13,17; Ezek. 20:12,20) Endeavour, pray, to understand well that word `holy:' it is one of the most important words in the Bible. God is the Holy One: that alone is holy to which God communicates His holiness by revealing Himself thereby. We know that the temple was holy, because God dwelt there. God had taken possession of it. He gave Himself to dwell there. So would God also sanctify man, take possession of him, fill him with Himself, with His own life, His disposition, His holiness. For this end, God took possession of the seventh day, appropriating it to Himself: He sanctified it. And He calls man also to sanctify it, and to acknowledge it as the Lord's day, the day of the Lord's presence and special working. He that does this, that sanctifies this day, shall, as God has promised, be sanctified by Him. (Read with attention Ex. 31:12-17, especially verse 13.)

God blessed the seventh day by sanctifying it. The blessing of God is the power of life, lodged by Him in anything, whereby it has a result full of blessing. Grass, and cattle, and man He blessed with power to multiply. (Gen. 1:22,28; 22:17) And so He lodged in the seventh day a power to bless: the promise that every one that sanctifies this day shall be sanctified and blessed by it. We must accustom ourselves always to think of the Sabbath as a blessed day, that certainly brings blessing. The blessing bound up with it is very great. (Isa. 46:4,7; 48:13,14)

There is still a third word that is used of the institution of the Sabbath: `God rested on the seventh day,' and, as it stands in Exodus, `was refreshed' or gladdened. God would sanctify and bless us, by introducing us into His rest. He would bring us to see that we are not to burden ourselves with our cares and weakness: we are to rest in Him, in His finished work, in His rest, which He takes because all is in order. This rest is not the outward cessation of employments; no: it is the rest of faith, by which we cease from our works as God did from His, because all is finished. Into this rest we enter by faith in the finished work of Jesus, in surrender to be sanctified by God. (Heb. 4:3,10)

Because Jesus finished the second creation in His resurrection, and we, by the power of His resurrection, enter into life and rest, the seventh day is changed to the first day of the week. There is no specific statement on this point: under the New Testament, the Spirit takes the place of the law. The Spirit of the Lord led His disciples to the celebration of this day. It was the day, not only on which the Lord was raised, but also on which, in all likelihood, the Spirit was poured out: not only on which the Lord manifested Himself during the forty days, but on which the Spirit also specially worked (John 20:1,19,26; Acts. 1:8; 20:7: 1 Cor. 26:2; Rev. 1:10)

The chief lessons that we have to learn about this day are the following: --

The principal aim of the Sabbath is to make you holy, as God is holy. God would have you holy: this is glory,

this is blessedness: this is His blessing, this His rest. God would have you holy, filled with Himself and His holiness. (Ex. 29:43,45; Ezek. 37:27,28; 1 Pet. 1:15,16)

In order to sanctify you, God must have you with Him, in His presence and fellowship. You are to come away from all your struggling and working to rest with Him: to rest quietly, without exertion or anxiety, in the certitude that the Son has finished everything, that the Father cares for you in everything, that the Spirit will work everything in you. In the holy rest of a soul that is converted to God, that is silent towards God, that remains silent before His presence to hear what God speaks in him, that reckons upon God to achieve all, God can reveal Himself. (Ps. 52:2,6; Hab. 2:20; Zech. 2:13; John 19:30) It is thus that He sanctifies us.

We sanctify the day of rest, first by withdrawal from all external business and distraction; but then especially by employing it as God's day, belonging to the Lord, for what He destined it, fellowship with Himself.

Take heed, on the other hand, that you do not use the day of rest only as a day for the public observance of divine worship. It is especially in private personal intercourse that God can bless and sanctify you. In the church, the understanding is kept active, and you have the ordinances of preaching, united prayer and praise, to keep you occupied. But we do not there always know whether the heart is really dealing with God, is taking delight in Him. This takes place in solitude. O, accustom yourself, then, to be alone with the Lord your God. Not only speak to Him: let Him speak to you: let your heart be the temple in whose holy silence His voice is heard. Rest in God: then will God say of your heart: This is my rest, here will I dwell. (Ps. 122:13,14)

Young Christian, set great store by the holy, the blessed day of rest. Long for it. Thank God for it. Keep it very holy. And, above all, let it be a day of inner fellowship with your God, of a living converse with His love.

> Holy God, I thank Thee for the holy day which Thou givest me as a token that Thou wilt sanctify me. Lord God, it is Thou who didst sanctify the day by taking it for Thyself: sanctify me in like manner by taking me for Thyself. Teach me so to enter into Thy rest, so to find my rest in Thy love, that my whole soul shall be silent before Thee, in order that Thou mayest make Thyself and Thy love known in me. And let every Sabbath be to me a foretaste of the eternal rest with Thee. Amen.

1. The Sabbath was the first of all the means of grace, instituted even before the Fall. You cannot see too high a value upon it.

2. Observe how specially the Three-One God has revealed Himself upon the day of rest. The Father rested on this day. The Son rose from the dead upon it. The Spirit sanctified this day by His special workings. You may on this day expect the fellowship and the powerful workings of the Three-One.

3. What is meant by the word `holy'? Of what is the day of rest a token, according to Ex. 31:13? How did God sanctify the day of rest? How does He sanctify us?

4. There are in this country peculiar difficulties in the way of the quiet celebration of the day of rest in a village, where the church is often very full. Yet one can lay aside that which is unnecessary and receive the influx of company. We can fix an hour in which there shall be reading and singing.

5. It is a matter of great importance to bring up children aright, for the sanctification of the Sabbath day, by avoiding worldly society and conversation, by accustoming them to read something that may be useful for them. For the younger children, there should be in every place a Sabbath school. For the older children, it would be well to come together in connection with such a book as this, every one with a Bible, and to review texts.

6. There is no better day than the Lord's day for doing good to body and soul. Let the works of Satan on this day come to an end, and work for the heathen and the ignorant be carried forward.

7. The principal point is this: the day of rest is the day of God's rest, of rest in and with God, and of

intercourse with Him. It is God that will sanctify us. He does this by taking possession of us.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XLII. HOLY BAPTISM

*`Go ye therefore, and make disciples * of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you.' -- Matt. 28:19*
`He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' -- Mark. 26:16

In these words of the institution of baptism, we find its meaning comprehended as in a summary. The word `teach' means: `make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them.' The believing disciple, as he is baptized in the water, is also to be baptized or introduced into the name of the Three-One God. By the name of the Father, the new birth and life as a child in the love of the Father are secured to him: (Gal. 3:26,27; 4:6,7) by the name of the Son, participation in the forgiveness of sins and the life that is in Christ: (Col. 2:12) by the name of the Holy Spirit, the indwelling and progressive renewal of the Spirit. (Tit. 2:5,6) And every baptized believer must always look upon baptism as his entrance into a covenant with the Three-One God, and as a pledge that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit will in course of time do for him all that they have promised. It requires a life-long study to know and enjoy all the blessing that is presented in baptism.

In other passages of Scripture the thrice two-fold blessing is again set forth separately: thus we find bound up with it the new birth required to make a child of God. `Except a man be born of water and the Sprit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' The baptized disciple has in God a Father, and he has to live as a child in the love of this Father. (John 3:3,5)

Then, again, baptism is brought more directly into connection with the redemption that is in Christ. Consequently, the first and simplest representation of it is the forgiveness or washing away of sins. Forgiveness is always the gateway or entrance into all blessing: hence baptism is also the sacrament of the beginning of the Christian life; but of a beginning that is maintained through the whole life. It is on this account that in Rom. 6 baptism is represented as the secret of the whole of sanctification, the entrance into a life in union with Jesus. `Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?' And then follows in verse 4-11, the more precise explanation of what it is to be baptized into the death of Jesus, and to arise out of this with Him for a new life in Him. This is elsewhere very powerfully comprehended in this one word: `As many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.' This alone is the right life of a baptized disciple: he has put on Christ. (Rom. 6:3,4; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12) As one is plunged into water and passes under it, so is the believing confessor baptized into the death of Christ, in order then to live and walk clothed with the new life of Christ.

And there are other passages where again there is connected with baptism the promise of the Spirit, not only as the Spirit of regeneration, but as the gift bestowed from heaven upon believers for indwelling and sealing, for progressive renewal. `He saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He poured out upon us richly.' Renewal is here the activity of the Spirit, whereby the new life that is planted in the new birth penetrates our whole being, so that all our thinking and doing is sanctified by Him. (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23; Tit. 2:5,6)

And all this rich blessing which lies in baptism is received by faith. `He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.' Baptism was not only a confession on man's part of the faith that he who would be a disciple already had, but equally on God's part a seal for the confirmation of faith, a covenant token in which the whole treasury of grace lay open, to be enjoyed throughout life. As often as a baptized believer sees a baptism administered, or reflects upon it, it is to be to him an encouragement to press by an over-growing faith into the full life of salvation

that the Three-One desires to work in him. The Holy Spirit is given to appropriate within us all the love of the Father and all the grace of the Son. The believing candidate for baptism is baptized into the death of Christ, has put on Christ: the Holy Spirit is in him to give him all this as his daily experience. (Eph. 4:14,15; Col 2:16)

> Lord God, make Thy holy baptism always operative in my soul as the experience that I am baptized into the death of Christ. And let Thy people everywhere understand by Thy Spirit what rich blessing lies thrown open in the baptism of their children. Amen.

And what are we now to think of Infant Baptism? With the assurance that those who cleave only to God's word, namely, the Baptists, will say to us: You cannot adduce a single passage in Scripture where the baptism of little children is spoken of.

Our answer is that this is thoroughly taught us in Scripture, not indeed by separate texts, but by its whole tenor. The reason why the Lord Jesus did not name children specially, was that this was altogether unnecessary. From the time of Abraham onwards God had engrained it in His people, that in His covenant He always reckoned parents and children together. He deals, not with separate individuals alone, but with households: the faith of a father held good for the child, so long as the child did not violate the covenant.

a. In Abraham, Isaac obtained part; in every father amongst the people of Israel his child obtained part in the covenant between Me and thee, and thy seed after thee, to be a God unto thee, and thy seed after thee.' (Gen. 17:7.)

b. Even so in connection with the Passover, it was ordained that, when a stranger would join the people, all his males should be circumcised. (Ex. 12:48)_ Up to the time of Christ it was unquestionably the case that, when any one belonged to the people of God or desired to become attached to them, his little children were received along with him. If the Lord had desired to change this, a very express injunction was needed for the purpose.

c. How expressly did the Lord Jesus declare of children: `Of such is the kingdom of God.' And under the kingdom should he not have as a Christian the privilege that he had as a Jew? Yes: the covenant of Abraham is still confirmed from child to child.

d. The answer of Paul to the goal-keeper confirms the continuance of what God had instituted: `Believe in the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.' Although there were no children in that house, this promise confirms the principle that God deals, not merely with individuals, but with households.

e. `Therefore are your children holy.' Since the child itself is holy, it has of itself a right to the holy token of the covenant.

** The Dutch version, like our Authorized, has `teach' here.*

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XLIII. THE LORD'S SUPPER

`The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ?' -- 1 Cor. 10:16

`He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me, and I in him. He that eateth Me, he also shall live because of Me.' -- John 6:56,57

All life has need of food: it is sustained by nourishment which it takes in from without. The heavenly life must have heavenly food; nothing less than Jesus Himself is the bread of life: `He that eateth Me shall live by Me.' (Ps. 42:3; Matt. 4:4; John 6:51)

This heavenly food, Jesus, is brought near to us in two of the means of grace, the word and the Lord's Supper. The word comes to present Jesus to us from the side of the intellectual life, by our thoughts. The Lord's Supper comes in like manner to present Jesus to us from the side of the emotional life, by the physical senses. Man has a double nature: he has spirit and body. Redemption begins with the spirit, but it would also penetrate to the body, (Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 6:13, 15,19,20; Phil. 3:21) Redemption is not complete until this mortal body also shall share in glory. The Supper is the pledge that the Lord will also change our body of humiliation and make it like His own glorified body by the working whereby He subdues all things to Himself. It is not simply because all that is corporeal is more clear and intelligible for us, that the Lord gives Himself in the bread of the Supper. No: by the body, Scripture often understands the whole man. In the Supper, Christ would take possession of the whole man, body and soul, to renew and sanctify it by the power of His holy body and blood. Even His body shares in His glory: even His body is communicated by the Holy Spirit. Even our body is fed with His holy body, and renewed by the working of the Holy Spirit. (Matt. 26:26; John 6:54,55; Rom. 8:11,13)

This feeding with the body of Christ takes place, on the side of the Lord by the Spirit, on our side by faith. On the side of the Lord by the Spirit: for the Spirit communicates to us the power of the glorified body, whereby even our bodies, according to Scripture, become members of His body. (1 Cor. 6:15,17; 12:13; Eph. 5:23,30) The Spirit gives us to drink of the life-power of His blood, so that that blood becomes the life and the joy of our soul. The bread is a participation in the body: the cup is a participation in the blood.

And this takes place on our side by faith: a faith that, above what can be seen or understood, reckons on the wonder-working power of the Holy Spirit to unite us really, alike in soul and body, with our Lord, by communicating Him inwardly to us. (Luke 1:37; 1 Cor. 2:9,12)

This is what the Heidelberg Catechism intends in Question and Answer 76.

`What is it to eat the glorified body of Christ and to drink His shed blood?'

`It is not only to receive with a believing heart the whole suffering and dying of Christ, and thereby to obtain forgiveness of sins and eternal life, but also therewith, by the Holy Spirit, who dwells alike in Christ and in us, to be so united more and more with His blessed body, that we, although He is in heaven and we are upon earth, are nevertheless flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone, and so live and are governed eternally by one Spirit, as the members of our body by a soul.' *

This deeply inward union with Jesus, even with His body and blood, is the great aim of the Lord's Supper. All that it teaches and gives us of the forgiveness of sins, of the remembrance of Jesus, of the confirmation of the divine covenant, of union with one another, of the announcement of the Lord's death till He comes, must lead to this: complete oneness with Jesus through the Spirit. (Matt. 26:28; Luke 22:19; John 6:56; 25:4; 1 Cor. 10:17;

11:25; Rev. 3:20) `He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me, and I in him. He that eateth Me, he shall live by Me.'

It is readily understood that the blessing of the Supper depends very much on preparation within the inner chamber, on the hunger and thirst with which one longs for the living God. (Job. 11:13; Isa. 45:1,3; Matt. 5:6; Luke 1:53; 1 Cor. 11:8) Do not imagine, however, that the Supper is nothing but an emblematic token of what we already have by faith in the word. No: it is a spiritual actual communication from the exalted Lord in heaven of the powers of His life: yet this, only according to the measure of desire and faith. Prepare for the Lord's Supper, therefore, with very earnest separation and prayer. And then expect that the Lord will, with His heavenly power, in a way to you incomprehensible, yet sure, renew your life.

> Blessed Lord, who didst institute the Supper in order to communicate Thyself to Thy redeemed as their food and their power of life, O teach us to use the Supper. Teach us at every opportunity to eat and to drink with great hunger and thirst for Thyself and for full union with Thee, believing that the Holy Spirit feeds us with Thy body and gives us to drink of Thy blood. Amen.

1. In connection with the Supper let us be especially on our guard against the idea of a mere divine service of the congregation or transitory emotion. Preaching and addresses may make an edifying impression, while there is little power or blessing.

2. For a meal, the first requisite is hunger. A strong hunger and thirst for God is indispensable.

3. In the Supper, Jesus desires to give Himself to us, and would have us give ourselves to Him. These are great and holy things.

4. The lessons of the Supper are many. It is a feast of remembrance; a feast of reconciliation; a covenant feast; a love feast; a feast of hope. But all these separate thoughts are only subordinate parts of the principal element: the living Jesus would give Himself to us in the most inward union. The Son of God would descend into our inmost parts; He would come in to celebrate the Supper with us. `He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, let him abide in Me, and I in him.'

5. And then union with Jesus is union with His people in love and sympathy.

6. The preparatory address is not itself the preparation: it is only a help to the private preparation which one must have in intercourse with Jesus.

7. To hold festival with God at His table is something of unspeakable importance. Pray, do not suppose that, because you are a Christian, it is easy for you to go and sit down. No: betake yourself to solitude with Jesus, that He may speak to you and say how you are to prepare you heart to eat with Him, yea, with Himself.

It is very useful to take the whole week before the Supper for preparation and the whole week after for reflection.

** `Der Heidelbergische Catechismus,' 28, 5:76.*

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XLIV. OBEDIENCE

`Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me from among all peoples.' -- Ex. 19:5
`The Lord will surely bless thee, if thou only diligently hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God.' -- Deut. 25:4,5
`By faith Abraham obeyed. -- Heb. 11:8
`He learned obedience by the things which He suffered; and having been made perfect, He became unto all them that obey Him the author of eternal salvation.' -- Heb. 5:8,9

Obedience is one of the most important words in the Bible and in the life of the Christian. It was in the way of disobedience that man lost the favour and the life of God: it is only in the way of obedience that that favour and that life can again be enjoyed. (Rom. 5:19; 6:16; 1 Pet. 1:2,14,22) God cannot possibly take pleasure in those who are not obedient, or bestow His blessing upon them. `If ye will obey My voice indeed, ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me;' `The Lord will surely bless thee, if thou only diligently hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God.' These are the eternal principles according to which alone man can enjoy God's favour and blessing.

We see this in the Lord Jesus. He says: `If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love.' He was in the love of the Father, but could not abide there otherwise than by obedience. And He says that this is equally for us the one way to abide in His love: we must keep His commandments. He came to open for us the way back to God: this way was the way of obedience: only he that through faith in Jesus walks in this way shall come to God. (Gen. 22:17,18; 26:4,5; 1 Sam. 25:22; John 25:10)

How gloriously is this connection betwixt the obedience of Jesus and our own expressed in Heb. 5: `He learned obedience, and became unto all them that obey Him the author of eternal salvation.' This is the bond of unity between Jesus and His people, the point of conformity and inward unanimity. He was obedient to the Father: they, on the other hand, are obedient to Him. He and they are both obedient. His obedience not only atones for, but drives out their disobedience. He and they bear one token: obedience to God. (Rom. 6:17; 2 Cor. 10:5; Phil. 2:8)

This obedience is a characteristic of the life of faith. It is called the obedience of faith. (Acts. 6:7; Rom. 1:5; 16:26) There is nothing in earthly things that so spurs on men to work as faith: the belief that there is advantage or joy to be found is the secret of all work. `By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed:' according to what I believe shall my works be. The faith that Jesus made me free from the power of sin for obedience and sets me in a suitable condition for it, has a mighty power to make me obedient. Faith in the overflowing blessing which the Father gives to it, faith in the promises of the love and indwelling of God, of the fulness of the Spirit which comes by this channel, strengthens for obedience. (Deut. 28:1; Isa. 63:5; John 14:15,11,23; Acts. 5:32)

The power of this faith, again, as also of obedience lies especially in intercourse with the living God Himself. There is but one Hebrew word for `*obeying* voice' and `*hearing* voice:' to hear aright prepares to obey. It is when I learn the will of God, not in the words of a man or a book, but from God Himself, when I hear the *voice* of God, that I shall surely believe what is promised and do what is commanded. The Holy Spirit is the voice of God: when we hear the living voice speak, obedience becomes easy. (Gen. 12:1,4; 31:13,16; Matt. 14:28; Luke 5:5; John 10:4,27) O let us then wait in silence upon God, and set our soul open before Him, that He may speak by His

Spirit. When in our Bible-reading and praying we learn to wait more upon God, so that we can say: My God has spoken this to me, has given me this promise, has commanded this, then shall we also obey. `To listen to the voice' earnestly, diligently, is the sure way to obedience.

With a servant, a warrior, a child, a subject, obedience is indispensable, the first token of integrity. And shall God, the living, glorious God, find no obedience with us? (Mal. 1:6; Matt. 7:21) No: let cheerful, punctual, precise obedience from the beginning be the token of the genuineness of our fellowship with the Son whose obedience is our life.

> O Father, who makest us Thy children in Christ, Thou makest us in Him obedient children, as He was obedient. Let the Holy Spirit make the obedience of Jesus so glorious and powerful in us, that obedience shall be the highest joy of our life. Teach us in everything only to seek to know what Thou desirest and then to do it. Amen.

For a life of obedience these things are required: --

1. *Decisive surrender*. I must no longer have to ask in every single case: Shall I or shall I not, must I, can I, be obedient? No: it must be such an unquestionable thing, that I shall know of nothing else than to be obedient. He that cherishes such a disposition and thinks of obedience as a thing that stands firm, shall find it easy, yea, shall literally taste in it great joy.

2. *The knowledge of God's will* through the Spirit. Pray, do not imagine that, because you know the Bible in some sort, you know the will of God. The knowledge of God's will is something spiritual: let the Holy Spirit make known to you the knowledge of God's will.

3. *The doing of all* that we know to be right. All doing teaches men: all doing of what is right teaches men obedience. All that the word, or conscience, or the Spirit tells you is right, actually do it. It helps to form doing into a holy habit, and is an exercise leading to more power and more knowledge. Do what is right, Christian, out of obedience to God, and you shall be blessed.

4. *Faith in the power of Christ*. You have the power to obey: be sure of this. Although you do not feel it, you have it in Christ your Lord by faith.

5. *The glad assurance of the blessing* of obedience. It unites us with our God, it wins His good pleasure and love, it strengthens our life, it brings the blessedness of heaven into our heart.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XLV. THE WILL OF GOD

`Thy will be done, as in heaven so on earth.' -- Matt. 6:10

The glory of heaven, where the Father dwells, is that His will is done there. He who would taste the blessedness of heaven must know the Father who is there, and do His will, as it is done in heaven. (Dan. 4:35)

`Heaven is an unending holy kingdom, of which the throne of God is the central point. Around this throne there are innumerable multitudes of pure, free beings, all ordered under powers and dominions. An indescribably rich and many-sided activity fills their life. All the highest and noblest that keeps man occupied is but a faint shadow of what finds place in this invisible world. All these beings possess each their free personal will. The will, however, has in self-conscious freedom, by its own choice, become one with the holy will of the holy Father, so that, in the midst of a diversity that flashes out in a million forms, only one will is accomplished -- the will of God. All the rich, blessed movement of the inhabitants of heaven has its origin and its aim in the will of God.'

And why is it then that His children on earth do not regard this will as their highest joy? Wherefore is it that the petition, `Thy will be done as in heaven,' is for the most part coupled with thoughts of the severe, the trying elements in the will of God, of the impossibility of our always rejoicing in God's will? The cause is this: we do not take pains to know the will of God in its glory and beauty, as the emanation of love, as the source of power and joy, as the expression of the perfection of God. We think of God's will only in the law that He gave and that we cannot keep, or in the trials in which this will appears in conflict with our own. O let us no longer do this, but take pains to understand that in the will of God all His love and blessedness are comprehended and can be apprehended by us. (Gal. 1:4; Eph. 1:5,9,11; Heb. 10:10)

Hear what the word says about the will of God: and the glorious things that are destined for us in this will.

`This is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son and believeth on Him should have eternal life.' The will of God is the rescue of sinners by faith in Christ. He that surrenders himself to this glorious will to seek souls shall have the assurance that God will bless his work to others; for he carries out God's will, even as Jesus did it. (John 4:35; 5:30; 6:38,40)

`It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.' The will of God is the maintenance, the strengthening, the keeping of the weakest of His children. What courage shall he have who unites himself cordially with this will. (Matt. 28:14)

`This is the will of God, even your sanctification.' With His whole heart, with all the power of His will, is God willing to make us holy. If we but open our heart to believe that it is not the law, but the will of God, something that He certainly gives and does where we permit Him, then shall we rejoice over our sanctification a stable and sure. (1 Thess. 4:3; 5;23)

`In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward.' A joyful, thankful life is what God has destined for us, is what He will work in us: what He desires, that He certainly does in those who do not withstand Him, but receive and suffer His will to work in them. (1 Thess. 5:18)

What we require then is to surrender our spirit to be filled with the thought, that what God would have He will certainly bring to pass when we do not resist Him. And if we further consider how glorious, and good, and perfect the will of God is, shall we not then yield ourselves with the whole heart, that this will may bring itself to accomplishment in us? (Rom. 12:2)

To this end, let us believe that the will of God is His love. Let us see what blessings in the word are connected

with the doing of this will. (Matt. 7:21; 12:50 John 7:17; 9:31; Eph. 5:17; 6:6; 1 John 2:17) Let us think of the glory of heaven as consisting in the doing of God's will, and make the choice that that our life on earth shall be. And let us with prayer and meditation suffer ourselves to be led of the Spirit to know this will aright. (Rom. 12:2; Col. 1:9; 4:12; Heb. 10:36; 13:21)

When we have thus learned to know the will of God on its glorious heavenly side in the word, and have done it, it will not be difficult for us also to bear this will where it appears to be contrary to our nature. We shall be so filled with the adoration of God and His will, that we shall resolve to see, and approve, and love this will in everything. And it will be the most glorious thought of our life that there is to be nothing, nothing, in which the will of God must not be known and honoured. (Ps. 42:9; Matt. 26:39; Heb. 10:7,9)

> O my Father, this was the glory of the Lord Jesus, that He did not His own will, but the will of His Father. This His glory I desire to have as mine. Father, open mine eyes and my heart to know the perfection, the glory of Thy will, and the glory of a life in this will. Teach me to understand Thy will aright, then willingly and cheerfully to execute it; and where I have to hear it, to do this also with filial adoration. Amen.

1. To do the will of God from the heart in prosperity is the only way to bear this will from the heart in suffering.
2. To do the will of God, I must know it spiritually. The light and the power of the Spirit go together: what He teaches to see as God's will, He certainly teaches all to do. Meditate much on Rom. 12:2, and pray earnestly to see God's will aright.
3. Learn always to adore the will of God in the least and the worst thing that man does to you. It is not the will of God that His child should be proved thereby. Say then always in the least as well as the greatest trials: It is the will of God that I am in this difficulty. This brings the soul to rest and silence, and teaches it to honour God in the trial. On this point read the chapter, `Is God in everything?' In the excellent little book, `The Christians Secret of Salvation.' *
4. When God gave a will to man, He gave him a power whereby he could accept or reject the will of God. Child of God, pray, open your will to receive the will of God with its full power, and to be filled with it. This is heavenly glory and blessedness, to be conscious every day: my will is in harmony with God's will; God's will lives in me. It is the will of God to work this in you.

* [*The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*, by H .W. S. F. E. Longely, chap. 8 p. 83. -- Translator]

The New Life

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XLVI. SELF-DENIAL

`Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.' -- Matt. 16:24

Self-denial was an exercise of which the Lord Jesus often spoke. He mentioned it several times as an indispensable token of every true disciple. He connects it with cross-bearing and losing life. (Matt. 10:38,39; Luke 9:23; 14:27; John 12:24,25) Our old life is so sinful, and remains to the end so sinful, that it is never in a condition for anything good. It must therefore be denied and mortified, in order that the new life, the life of God, may have free dominion over us. (Rom. 6:6; 8:13; Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:14; Col. 3:5) Let the young Christian resolve from the very beginning to deny himself wholly, in accordance with the injunction of his Lord. At the outset, it seems severe: he will find that it is the source of inconceivable blessing.

Let self-denial reach our carnal understanding. It was when Peter had spoken according to the thought of the natural understanding, that the Lord had to say to him: `Thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men.' You must deny yourselves and your own thoughts. We must be careful that the activity of our understanding with the word and prayer, in endeavouring to reach the knowledge of what is God's will, does not deceive us with a service of God that is not in spirit and in truth. Deny your carnal understanding; bring it to silence; in holy silence give place to the Holy Spirit; let the voice of God be heard in your heart. (Matt. 26:21; 1 Cor. 1:17,27; 2:6; Col. 2:18)

Deny also your own will, with all its lusts and desires. Let it be once for all unquestionable that the will of God in everything is your choice, and that therefore every desire that does not fall in with this will, must be mortified. Pray, believe that in the will of God there is heavenly blessedness, and that therefore self-denial appears severe only at the outset, but, when you exercise yourself heartily in it, becomes a great joy. Let the body with all its life abide under the law of self-denial. (Matt. 26:39; Rom. 6:13; 1 Cor. 9:25,27)

Deny also your own honour. Seek not it, but the honour of God. This brings such a rest into the soul. `How can ye believe,' says Jesus, `which receive glory one of another?' Although your honour be hurt or reviled, commit it to God to watch over it. Be content to be little, to be nothing. `Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom.' (John 5:44; 7:18; 8:50; 1 Thess. 2:6)

Deny, in like manner, your own power. Cherish the deep conviction that it is those who are weak, those who are nothing, that God can use. Be very much afraid of your own endeavours in the service of God, however sincere they may be. Although you feel as if you had power, say before God that you have it not, that your power is nothing: continuous denial of your own power is the way to enjoy the power of God. It is in the heart that dies to its own power, that the Holy Spirit decides to dwell and bring the power of God. (2 Cor. 3:5; 12:9)

Deny especially your own interests. Live not to please yourself, but your neighbour. He that seeks his own life shall lose it; he that would live for himself shall not find life. But he that would really imitate Jesus, to share in His joy, let him give his life as He did, let him sacrifice his own interests. (Rom. 15:1,3; 1 Cor. 10:23,24; Eph. 2:4)

Beloved Christian, at conversion you had to make a choice betwixt your own self and Christ, which you should obey. You then said: `Not I, but Christ' Now you are to confirm this choice every day. The more you do so, the more joyful and blessed will it be for you to renounce the sinful self, to cast aside unholy self-working, and suffer Jesus to be all. The way of self-denial is a way of deep heavenly blessedness.

There are very many Christians that observe nothing of this way. They would have Jesus to make them free

from punishment, but not to liberate them from themselves, from their own will. But the invitation to discipleship still always rings: `If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.'

The reason as well as the power for self-denial, we find in the little word *Me*. `If any man would come after *Me,* let him deny *himself*, and follow *Me.'* The old life is in ourselves: the new life is in Jesus: the new life cannot rule without driving out the old. Where one's own self had everything to say, it must be nothing. This it would fain not be: on this account there must be all the day denial of one's self, imitation of Jesus. He, with His teaching, His will, His honour, His interests, must fill the heart. But he that has and knows Him, willingly denies himself: Christ is so precious to him, that he sacrifices everything, even himself, to win Him. (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:7,8)

This is the true life of faith. Not according to what nature sees or thinks to be acceptable, do I live, but according to what Jesus says and would have. Every day and every hour I confirm the wonderful bargain: `Not I, but Christ:' I nothing, Christ everything. `Ye died,' and no longer have power, or will, or honour; `your life is hid with Christ in God:' Christ's power and will alone prevail. O soul, cheerfully deny that sinful wretched self, in order that the glorious Christ may dwell in you.

> Precious Saviour, teach me what self-denial is. Teach me so to distrust my heart that in nothing shall I yield to its fancy. Teach me so to know Thee that it shall be impossible for me to do anything else than to offer up myself to possess Thee and Thy life. Amen.

1. Of the denial of the natural understanding Tersteegen says: `God and His truth are never known aright, save by such an one as, by the dying of his carnal nature, his inclinations, passions, and will, is made very earnest and silent; and by the abandonment of the manifold deliberations of the understanding, has become very simple and childlike. We must give our heart and our will entirely to God, forsaking our own will in all things, releasing ourselves especially from the manifold imaginations and activities of the understanding, even in spiritual things, that it may collect itself silently in the heart, and dwell as in the heart with God. Not in the head, but in the heart is found the living truth itself, the anointing that teaches us all things. In the heart is found the living fountain of light. Any one that lives in a heart entertained with God, will often with a glance of the eye discern more truth than another with the greatest exertion.'

2. Read the above passage with care: you will find in it the reason why we have several times said, that when you read or pray you must at every opportunity keep quiet for a little and set yourself in entire silence before God. This is necessary, to bring the activity of the natural understanding to silence and to set the heart open before God, that He may speak there. In the heart is the temple where worship in spirit and truth takes place. Distrust, deny your understanding in spiritual things. The natural understanding is in the head: the spiritual understanding is in the heart, the temple of God. O preserve in the temple of God a holy silence before His countenance: then He will speak.

3. `The peculiar mark of Christian self-denial is inward cheerfulness and joy in the midst of privation. The word of God makes unceasing joy a duty. This gladsome disposition, which, hailing from eternity, has all change and vicissitude under foot, will hold its ground, not only in times of severe suffering, but also in the self-denial of every day and hour that is inseparable from the Christian life.'

4. What all am I to deny? Deny yourself. How shall I know where and when to deny myself? Do so always and in everything. And if you do not rightly understand that answer, know that no one can give you the right explanation of it but Jesus Himself. To imitate Him, to be taught of Him, is the only way to self-denial. Only when Jesus comes in, does self go out.

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by Andrew Murray

XLVII. DISCRETION

`For wisdom shall enter into thine heart, and knowledge shall be pleasant unto thy soul; discretion shall watch over thee, understanding shall keep thee.' -- Prov. 2:10,11
`My son, keep sound wisdom and discretion: so shall they be life unto thy soul.' -- Prov. 3:21,22
`Ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rash.' -- Acts. 19:36

Indiscretion is not merely the sin of the unconverted: amongst the people of God, it is often the cause of much evil and misery. We read of Moses: `They angered him also at the waters of Meribah, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes: because they were rebellious against his spirit, and he spake unadvisedly with his lips.' So of Uzzah's touching the ark: `And God smote him there for his error' (*margin,* rashness). (2 Sam. 6:7; Ps. 106:38; Prov. 12:18)

What discretion is, and why it is so necessary, may be easily explained. When an army marches into the province of an enemy, its safety depends on the guards which are set, which are to be always on the watch, to know and to give warning when the enemy approaches. Advance guards are sent out that the territory and power of the enemy may be known. This prudence, which looks out beforehand and looks round, is indispensable.

The Christian lives in the province of the enemy. All that surrounds him may become a snare or an occasion of sin. Therefore his whole walk is to be carried out in a holy reserve and watchfulness, in order that he may do nothing indiscreet. He watches and prays that he may not enter into temptation. (Matt. 26:41: Luke 1:36; Eph. 6:18; 1 Pet. 4:7; 5:8) Prudence keeps guard over him. (1 Sam. 18:14; Matt. 10:16; Luke 1:17; 16:8; Eph. 5:15; Tit. 2:4)

Discretion keeps watch over the lips. O what loss many a child of God suffers by the thought that if he only speaks nothing wrong, he may speak what he will. He knows not how, through much speaking, the soul becomes ensnared in the distractions of the world, because in the multitude of words there is not wanting transgression. Discretion endeavours not to speak, save for the glory of God and blessing to neighbours. (Ps. 39:2; 141:3; Prov. 10:19; Eccles. 5:1,2)

Over the ear also discretion keeps guard. Through the gate of the ear comes to me all the news of the world, all the indiscreet speech of others, to infect me. Very hurtful for the soul is eagerness for news. One can afterwards no more look into one's self: one lives wholly in the world round about. Corinth was much more godless than Athens; but in this last place, where they `spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing,' very few were converted. Take heed, says Jesus, what ye hear. (Prov. 2:2; 18:15; Mark 4:24; Acts. 17:21)

On this account, discretion keeps watch over the society in which the Christian mingles. `He that separateth himself seeketh his own desire.' The child of God has no the freedom to yield himself to the society of the world so much and so long as he would: he must know the will of his Father. (Ps. 1:1; Prov. 28:1; 2 Cor. 6:14; 2 Thess. 3:14; 2 John 10,11)

Discretion keeps watch over all lawful occupations and possessions. It knows how gradually and stealthily the love of money, worldly-mindedness, the secret power of the flesh, obtains the upper hand, and that it can never reckon itself free from this temptation. (Matt. 13:22; Luke 21:34; 1 Tim. 6:9,17)

And, above all, it keeps watch over the heart, because there are the issues of life, there is the fountain out of which everything springs. Remembering the word, `he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool,' it walks in deep

humility, and it works out salvation with fear and trembling. (Prov. 3:21,23; 4:23; 28:16; Jer. 31:33)

And whence has the soul the power to be with a never-resting watchfulness on its guard against the thousand dangers that surround it on all sides? Is it not fatiguing, exhausting, harassing, to have thus to watch always and never to be at rest in the certainty that there is no danger? No: absolutely not. Discretion brings just the highest restfulness. It has its security and strength in its heavenly Keeper, who slumbers not nor sleeps. In confidence in Him, under the inspiration of His Spirit, discretion does its work: the Christian walks as one that is wise; the dignity of a holy prudence adorns him in all his actions. The rest of faith, the faith that Jesus watches and guards, binds to Him in love, and holy discretion springs as of its own accord from a love that would not grieve or abandon Him, from a faith that has its strength for everything in Him.

> O Lord my God, guard me, that I may not be of the indiscreet in heart. Let the prudence of the righteous always characterize me, in order that in everything I may be kept from giving offense. Amen.

1. To one who bestowed great care on having his horse and cart in thoroughly good order, it was once said: Come, it is not necessary to be always taking so much pains with this. His answer was: I have always found my prudence paid. How many a Christian has need of this lesson. How many a young Christian may well pray for this -- that his conversion may be, according to God's word, `to the prudence of the righteous.'

2. Discretion has its *root* in self-knowledge. The deeper my knowledge of my impotence and the sinfulness of my flesh is, the greater is the need of watchfulness. It is thus our element of true self-denial.

3. Discretion has its *power* in faith: the Lord is our Keeper, and He does His keeping through the Spirit keeping us in mind. It is from Him that our discretion comes.

4. Its activity is not limited to ourselves: it reaches out especially to our neighbour, in the way of giving him no offense, and in laying no stumbling-block in his way. (Rom. 14:13; 1 Cor. 8:9; 10:32; Phil. 1:10)

5. It finds great delight in silence, so as to commit its way to the Lord with composure and deliberation. It esteems highly the word of the town-clerk of Ephesus: `Ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rash.'

6. In great generals and their victories, we see that discretion is not timidity: it is consistent with the highest courage and the most joyful certitude of victory. Discretion watches against rashness, but enhances the courage of faith.

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XLVIII. MONEY

`Money answereth all things.' -- Eccles. 10:19
`I verily dedicate the silver unto the Lord from my hand.' -- Judg. 17:3
`Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back mine own with interest.' -- Matt. 25:27

It is in his dealing with the world and its possessions, that the Christian finds one of the opportunities in which he is to manifest his self-denial and the spirit of discretion. (John 17:15,16; 1 Cor. 7:31) Since it is in money that all value or property on earth will finds its expression, so it is especially in his dealing with money that he can show whether he is free from worldliness to deny himself and to serve his God. In order rightly to comprehend this, we must consider for a little what falls to be said about money.

What is money the token of? It is the token of the work by which a man earns it: of his industry, and zeal, and ability in that work: of his success and the blessing of God upon the work. It is also the token of all that I can do with money: the token of the work that others would do for me, of the power that I thereby have to accomplish what I desire, of the influence which I exercise on those that are dependent upon me for my money: a token of all the possessions or enjoyments that are to be obtained by money: a token of all upon earth that can make life desirable: yea, a token of life itself, which without the purchase of indispensable food cannot be supported.

Money is thus, indeed, of earthly things, one of the most desirable and fruitful. No wonder that it is thus esteemed by all.

What is the danger of money? What is the sin that is done with it, that the Bible and experience should so warn us to be prudent in dealing with it? There is the anxiousness that knows not if there will be sufficient money. (Matt. 6:31) There is the coveteousness that longs too much for it. (1 John 2:16) There is the dishonesty that, without gross deception or theft, does not give to a neighbour what belongs to him. (Jas. 5:4) There is the lovelessness that would draw everything to one's self and does not keep another. (Luke 16:21) There is love of money, which seeks after riches and lands in avarice. (1 Tim. 6:9,10,17) There is robbery of God and the poor in withholding the share that belongs to them. (Prov. 7:24,26; Ma. 3:8)

What is the blessing of money? If the danger of sin is so great, would it not be better if there were no money? Is it not better to be without money? No: even for the spiritual life money may be a great blessing: as an exercise in industry and activity, (Prov. 13:4; 18:19) in care and economy: as a token of God's blessing upon our work: (Prov. 10:4,22) as an opportunity for showing that we can possess and lay it out for God, without withholding it or cleaving to it; that by means of it we can manifest our generosity to the poor and our overflowing love for God's cause: (Isa. 47:7,8,10,11; 2 Cor. 8:14,15) as a means of glorifying God by our beneficence, and of spreading among men the gold of heavenly blessing: (2 Cor. 9:12,13) as a thing that, according to the assurance of Jesus, we can exchange for a treasure in heaven. (Matt. 19:21; Luke 12:33)

And what is now the way to be freed from the danger and to be led into the right blessing of money?

Let God be Lord over your money. Receive all your money with thanksgiving, as coming from God in answer to the prayer: `Give us this day our daily bread.' (1 Chron. 29:14)

Lay it all down before God as belonging to Him. Say with the woman: `I verily dedicate the silver unto the Lord.' (1 Tim. 4:4,5)

Let your dealing with your money be a part of your spiritual life. Receive, and possess, and give out your

money as one who has been bought at a high price, redeemed, not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood. (Luke 19:8)

Make what the word of God says of money, of earthly good, a special study. The word of the Father alone teaches how the child of the Father is to use blessing.

Reflect much on the fact that it is not given to you for yourself alone, but for you and your brethren together. The blessing of money is to do good to others, and make them rejoice.

Remember especially that it can be given up to the Father and the service of His kingdom for the upbuilding of His spiritual temple, for the extension of His sway. Every time of spiritual blessing mentioned in Scripture was a time of cheerful giving for God's cause. Even the outpouring of the Holy Spirit make itself known in the giving of money for the Lord. (Ex. 36:5; 1 Chron. 29:6,9; Acts. 2:15; 4:34)

Christian, understand it: all the deepest deliberations of the heart and its most spiritual activities can manifest themselves in the way in which we deal with our money. Love to God, love to our neighbour, victory over the world by faith, the hope of everlasting treasure, faithfulness as steward, joy in God's service, cheerful self-denial, holy discretion, the glorious freedom of the children of God, can all be seen in the use of money. Money can be the means of the most glorious fellowship with God, and the full enjoyment of the blessedness of being able to honour and serve Him.

> Lord God, make me rightly discern in what close connection my money stands with my spiritual life. Let the Holy Spirit lead and sanctify me, so that all my earning and receiving, my keeping and dispensing of money may always be well-pleasing to Thee and a blessing to my soul. Amen.

1. John Wesley always said that there were three rules about the use of money which he gave to men in business, and by which he was sure that they would experience benefit.

Make as much money as you can. Be industrious and diligent.

Save as much money as you can. Be no spendthrift, live frugally and prudently.

Give away as much money as you can. That is the divine destination of money; that makes it an everlasting blessing for yourselves and others.

2. Acquaint yourself with the magnificent prayer of David in 1 Chron. 29. Receive it into your soul; it teaches us the blessedness and the glorification of God that spring from cheerful giving.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

XLIX. THE FREEDOM OF THE CHRISTIAN

`Being made free from sin, ye became bond-servants of righteousness. Being made free from sin, ye have your fruit unto sanctification.' -- Rom. 6:18,22
`But now we have been discharged from the law.' -- Rom. 7:6
`The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death.' -- Rom. 8:2

Freedom is counted in Scripture as one of the greatest privileges of the child of God. There is nothing in history for which nations have made great sacrifices except freedom. Slavery is the lowest condition into which man can sink, for in it he can no longer dispose of himself. Freedom is the deepest need of his nature.

To be free, then, is the condition in which anything can develop itself according to the law of its nature, that is, according to its disposition. Without freedom nothing can attain its destiny or become what it ought to be. This is true alike of the animal and man, of the corporeal and the spiritual. It was for this cause that God in Israel chose the redemption out of the slavery of Egypt into the glorious liberty of God's people, as the everlasting type of redemption out of the slavery of sin into the liberty of the children of God. (Ex. 1:14; 4:23; 6:5; 20:2; Deut. 24:8) On this account, Jesus said on earth: `If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.' And the Holy Scriptures teach us to stand fast in the freedom with which Christ made us free. A right insight into this freedom opens up to us one of the greatest glories of the life that the grace of God has prepared for us. (John 8:32,36; Gal. 4:21,31; 5:1)

In the three passages, from the Epistle to the Romans, in which sanctification is dealt with, a threefold freedom is spoken of. There is freedom from sin in the sixth chapter, freedom from the law in the seventh, freedom from the law of sin in the eighth.

There is freedom from sin (Rom. 6:7,18,22). Sin is represented as a power that rules over man, under which he is brought and taken captive, and that urges him as a slave to evil. (John 8:34; Rom. 7:14,23; 2 Pet. 2:19) By the death of Christ and in Christ of the believer, who is one with Him, he is made entirely free from the dominion of sin: it has no more power over him. If, then, he still does sin, it is because he, not knowing his freedom by faith, permits sin still to rule over him. But it by faith he fully accepts what the word of God thus confirms, then sin has no power over him: he overcomes it by the faith that he is made free from it. (Rom. 5:21; 6:12,14)

Then there is freedom from the law. This leads us deeper into the life of grace than freedom from sin. According to Scripture, law and sin always go together. `The strength of sin is the law:' The law does nothing but make the offense greater. (Rom. 4:15; 5:13,20; 7:13; 1 Cor. 15:56) The law is the token of our sinfulness, cannot help us against sin, but with its demand for perfect obedience gives us over hopeless to the power of sin. The Christian who does not discern that he is made free from the law will still always abide under sin. (Rom. 6:15; 7:5) Christ and the law cannot rule over us together: in every endeavour to fulfil the law as believers, we are taken captive by sin. (Rom. 7:5,23) The Christian must know that he is entirely free from the law, from the *you must* that stands without us and over us: then for the first time shall he know what it is to be free from sin.

Then there is also freedom from the law of sin, actual liberation from the power of sin in our members. What we have in Christ, freedom from sin and from the law, is inwardly appropriated for us by the Spirit of God. `The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death.' The Holy Spirit in us takes the place of the law over us. `If ye are led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.' Freeing from the law is not

anything external, but takes place according to the measure the Spirit obtains dominion in us and leads us. `Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.' According as the law of the Spirit rules in us, we are made free from the law, from the law of sin. We are then free to do what we, as God's children, would fain do, free to serve God. (2 Cor. 3:17; Gal. 5:18)

Free expresses a condition in which nothing hinders me from being what I would be and ought to be. In other words, *free* is to be able to do what I would. The power of sin over us, the power of the law against us, the power of the law of sin in us, hinder us. But he that stands in the freedom of the Holy Spirit, he that is then truly free, nothing can prevent or hinder him from being what he would be and ought to be. As it is the nature of a tree to grow upwards, and it also grows as it is free from all hindrances, so a child of God then grows to what he ought to be and shall be. And according as the Holy Spirit leads him into this freedom, there springs up the joyful consciousness of his strength for the life of faith. He joyfully shouts: `I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me.' `Thanks be unto God which always leadeth us in triumph in Christ.'

> Son of God, anointed with the Spirit to announce freedom to the captives, make me also truly free. Let the Spirit of life in Thee, my Lord, make me free from the law of sin and of death. I am Thy ransomed one. O let me live as Thy freed one, who is hindered by nothing from serving Thee. Amen.

1. The freedom of the Christian extends over his whole life. He is free in relation to the institutions and teachings of men. `Ye were bought with a price: become not bond-servants of men.' (1 Cor. 7:23; Col. 2:20) He is free in relation to the world, and in the use of what God gives: he has power to possess it or to dispense with it, to enjoy it or to sacrifice it. (1 Cor. 8:8; 9:4,5)

2. This freedom is no lawlessness. We are free from sin and the law to serve God in the Spirit. We are not under the law, but give ourselves, with free choice and in love, to Him who loved. us. (Rom. 6:18; Gal. 5:13; 1 Pet. 2:16) Not under the law, also not without law; but in the law; a new, a higher law, `The law of the Spirit of life,' `the law of liberty,' the law written in our hearts, is our rule and measure. (1 Cor. 9:21; Jas. 1:15; 2:12) In this last passage the translation ought to be: `bound by a law to Christ.'

3. This freedom has its subsistence from the word and also in it: the more the word abides in me, and the truth lives in me, the freer I become. (John 8:31,32,36)

4. Freedom manifests itself in love. I am free from the law, and from men, and from institutions, to be able now like Christ to surrender myself for others. (Rom. 14:13,21; Ga. 5:13; 6:1)

5. This glorious liberty to serve God and our neighbour in love is a spiritual thing. We cannot by any means seize it and draw it to us. It becomes known only by a life in the Holy Spirit. `Where the Spirit of the Lord is there liberty.' `If ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.' It is the Holy Spirit that makes free. Let us suffer ourselves to be introduced by Him into the effectual glorious liberty of the children of God. `The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed me from the law of sin and of death.'

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

L. GROWTH

`So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed upon the earth; and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow, he knoweth not how. The earth beareth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.' -- Mark 4:26-28

`The Head, from whom the whole body increaseth with the increase of God' -- Col. 2:19

`That we may grow into Him which is the Head, even Christ, from whom the whole body maketh the increase.' -- Eph. 4:15,16

Death is always a standing still: life is always movement, progressiveness. Increase or growth is the law of all created life; consequently, the new life in man is destined to increase, and always by becoming stronger. As there are in the seed and in the earth a life and power of growth by which the plant is impelled to have its full height and fruit; so is there in the seed of the eternal life an impelling force by which also that life always increases and grows with a divine growth, until we come to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. (Eph. 4:12; 2 Thess. 1:4)

I this parable of the seed that springs up of itself, and becomes great and bears fruit, the Lord teaches us two of the most important lessons on the increase of the spiritual life. The one is that of its *self-sufficiency,* the other that of its *gradualness.*

The first lesson is for those that ask what they are to do in order to grow and advance more in grace. As the Lord said of the body: `Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto his stature? consider the lilies of the field how they grow;' so He says to us here that we can do nothing, and need to do nothing, to make the spiritual life grow. (Hos. 14:16; Matt. 6:25,27,28) Do you not see how, while man slept, the seed sprang up and became high, he knew not how, and how the earth brought forth fruit of itself? When man has once sowed, he must reckon that God cares for the growth: he has not to care: he must trust and rest.

And must man then do nothing? He can do nothing: it is from within that the power of life must come: from the life, from the Spirit implanted in him. To the growth itself he can contribute nothing: it shall be given him to grow. (Ps. 92:14; Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:3)

All that he can do is to let the life grow. All that can hinder the life, he must take away and keep away. If there are thorns and thistles that take away place and power in the soil which the plant should have, he can take them away. (Jer. 4:13; Matt. 13:22,23) The plant must have its place in the earth alone and undivided. For this the husbandman can care: then it grows further *of itself.* So must the Christian take away what can hinder the growth of the new life: to surrender the heart entire and undivided for the new life, to hold it alone in possession and to fill it, so that it may grow free and unhindered. (Son. 2:15; Heb. 12;1)

The husbandman can also bring forward what the plant requires in the way of food or drink: he can manure or moisten the soil as it may be needful. So must the believer see to it that for the new life there is brought forward nourishment out of the word, the living water of the Spirit, by prayer. It is in Christ that the new life is planted: from Him it increases with divine increase: abide rooted in Him by the exercise of faith: the life will grow of itself. (2 John 15:4,5; Col. 2:6,7) Give it what it must have: take away what can hinder it: the life will grow and increase of itself.

Then comes in the second lesson of the parable: the gradualness of the growth: `first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.' Do not expect everything at once. Give God time. By faith and endurance we inherit

the promises: the faith that knows that it has everything in Christ: the endurance that expects everything in its time according to the rule and the order of the divine government. Give God time. Give the new life time. It is by continued abiding in the earth that the plant grows: it is by continuous standing in grace, in Christ Himself, in whom God has planted us, that the new life grows. (Heb. 3:13; 6:12,15; Jas. 5:7)

Yes: give the new life only sufficient time: time in prayer: time in intercourse with God: time in continuous exercise of faith: time in persistent separation from the world. Give it time: slow but sure, hidden but real, in apparent weakness but with heavenly power, is the divine growth with which the life of God in the soul grows up to the perfect man in Christ.

> Lord God, graciously strengthen the faith of Thy children, that their growth and progress are in Thy hands. Enable them to see what a precious, powerful life was implanted in them by Thyself, a life that increases with a divine increase. Enable them by faith and patience to inherit the promises. And teach them in that faith to take away all that can hinder the new life, to bring forward all that can further it, so that Thou mayest make Thy work in them glorious. Amen.

1. For a plant, the principal thing is the son in which it stands and out of which it draws its strength. For the Christian, this also is the principal thing: he is in Christ. Christ is all: he must grow up in Him, for out of Him the body obtains its increase. To abide in Christ by faith -- that is the main thing.
2. Remember that faith must set itself towards a silent restfulness, that growth is just like that of the lilies on God's hands, and that He will see to it that we increase and grow strong.
3. By this firm and joyful faith, we become `Strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory, unto all patience and long-suffering with joy.' (Col. 1:11)
4. This faith, that God cares for our growth, takes away all anxiety, and gives courage for doing the two things that we have to do: the taking away of what may be obstructive to the new life, the bringing forward of what may be serviceable to it.
5. Observe well the distinction betwixt planting and growing. Planting is the work of a moment: in a moment the earth receives the seed: after that comes the slow growth. Without delay -- immediately must the sinner *receive* the word: before conversion there is no delay. Then with time follows the growth of the seed.
6. The main thing is Christ: from Him and in Him is our growth. He is the soil that of itself brings forth fruit, we know not how. Hold daily intercourse with Him.

There is a book *`Abide in Christ'* (Nisbet & Co.), with meditations for a month on the blessed life of continued fellowship with Him.

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

LI. SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

`O how love I Thy law: it is my meditation all the day.' -- Ps. 119:97
`Ye search (or search ye) the Scriptures: and these are they which bear witness of Me.' -- John 5:39
`The word did not profit them, because they were not united by faith with them that heard.' -- Heb. 4:2

At the beginning of this book there is more than one passage upon the use of God's word in the life of grace. Ere I take leave of my readers, I would fain once again come back to this all-important point. I cannot too earnestly and urgently address this call to my beloved young brothers and sisters: Upon your use of the word of God your spiritual life in great measure depends. Man lives by the word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. Therefore seek with your whole heart to learn how to use God's word aright. To this end, receive the following hints.

Read the word *more with the heart than with the understanding:* with the understanding I would know and comprehend; with the heart I desire, and love, and hold fast. Let the understanding be the servant of the heart. Be much afraid of the understanding of the carnal nature, that cannot receive spiritual things. (1 Cor. 1:12,27; 2:6,12; Col. 2:18) Deny your understanding, and wait in humility on the Spirit of God. On every occasion, still keep silent amidst your reading of the word, and say to yourselves: this word I now receive in my heart, to love and to let it live in me. (Ps. 119:10,11,47; Rom. 10:8; Jas. 1:21)

Read the word always *in fellowship with the living God.* The power of a word depends on my conviction regarding the man from whom it comes. First set yourself in loving fellowship with the living God under the impression of His nearness and love: deal with the word under the full conviction that He, the eternal God, is speaking with you; and let the heart be silent to listen to God, to God Himself. (Gen. 17:3; 1 Sam. 3:9,10; Isa. 50:4; 52:6; Jer. 1:2) Then the word certainly becomes to you a great blessing.

Read the word, *as a living word in which the Spirit of God dwells, and that certainly works in those that believe.* The word is seed. Seed has life, and grows and yields fruit of itself. The word has life, and of itself grows and yields fruit. (Mark 4:27,28; John 6:63; 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:23) If you do not wholly understand it, if you do not feel its power, carry it in your heart; ponder it and meditate upon it: it will of itself begin to yield a working and growth in you. (Ps. 119:15,40,48,69; 2 Tim. 3:16,17) The Spirit of God is with and in the word.

Read it *with the resolve to be, not only a hearer, but a doer of the word.* Let the great question be: What would God now have of me with this word? If the answer is: He would have me believe it and reckon upon Him to fulfil it: do this immediately from the heart. If the word is a command of what you are to do, yield yourself immediately to do it. (Matt. 5:19,20; 7:21,24; Luke 11:28; Jas. 1:21,25) O there is an unspeakable blessedness in the doing of God's word, and in the surrender of myself to be and to act just as the word says and would have it. Be not hearers, but doers of the word.

Read the word *with time.* I see more and more that one obtains nothing on earth without time. Give the word time. Give the word time, at every occasion on which you sit down to read it, to come into your heart. Give it time, in the persistence with which you cleave to it, from day to day, and month after month. (Deut. 6:5; Ps. 1:2; 119:97; Jer. 15:16) By perseverance you become exercised and more accustomed to the word: the word begins to work. Pray, be not dispirited when you do not understand the word. Hold on: take courage: give the word time: later on the word will explain itself. David had to meditate day and night to understand it.

Read the word *with a searching of the Scriptures.* The best explanation of the Bible is the Bible itself. Take

three or four texts upon a point: set them close to one another and compare them. See wherein they agree and wherein they differ; where they say the same thing or again something else. Let the word of God at one time be cleared up and confirmed by what He said at another time on the same subject: this is the safest and the best explanation. Even the sacred writers use this method of instruction with the Scriptures: *`and again.'* (Isa. 34:16; John 19:37; Acts. 17:11; Heb. 2:13) Do not complain that this method takes too much time and pains: it is worthy of the pains: your pains will be rewarded. On earth you have nothing without pains. (Prov. 2:4,5; 3:13,18; Matt. 13:44) Even the bread of life we have to eat in the sweat of our face. He that would go to heaven never goes without taking pains. Search the Scriptures: it will be richly recompensed to you.

Young Christian, let one of my last and most earnest words to you be this: on your dealing with the word of God depend your growth, your power, your life. Love God's word then; esteem it sweeter than honey: better than thousands of gold or silver. In the word, God can and will reveal His heart to you. In the word, Jesus will communicate Himself and all His grace. In the word, the Holy Spirit will come in to you, to renew your heart and all your thoughts, according to the mind and will of God. O, then, read not simply enough of the word to keep you from declension, but reckon it one of your chief occupations on earth to yield yourself that God may fill you with His word, that He may fulfil His word in you.

> Lord God, what grace it is that Thou speakest to us in Thy word, that we in Thy word have access to Thy heart, to Thy will, to Thy love. O forgive us our sins against Thy precious word. And, Lord, let the new life become so strong by the Spirit in us, that all its desire shall be to abide in Thy word. Amen.

1. Ps. 119. In the middle of the Bible stands this psalm, in which the praise and the love of God's word are so strikingly expressed. It is not enough for us to read through the divisions of this psalm successively: we must take its principal points, and one with another seek what is said in different passages upon each of these. Let us, for example, take the following points, observing the indications of the answers, and seek in this way to come under the full impression of what is taught us of the glory of God's word: --

> 1. The blessing that the word gives. Verses, 1,2,6,9,11,14,24,45,46,47, and so on. 2. The appellations that in this psalm are given to God's word. 3. How we have to handle the word. (Observe -- walk -- keep -- mark -- and so on.) 4. Prayer for divine teaching. Verses 5,10,12,18,19,26. 5. Surrender to obedience to the word. Verses 93,105,106,112,128,133. 6. God's word the basis of our prayer. Verses 41,49,58,76,107,116,170. 7. Observance as the ground of confidence in prayer. Verses 77,159,176. 8. Observance as promised upon the hearing of prayer. Verses 8,17,33,32,44. 9. The power to observe the word. Verses 32,36,41,42,117,135,146. 10. The praise of God's word. Verses 54,72,97,129,130,144. 11. The confident confession of obedience. Verses 102,110,121,168. 12. Personal intercourse with God, seen in the use of *Thou* and *I, Thine* and *Mine.*

I have merely mentioned a few points and a few verses. Seek out more and mark them, until your mind is filled with the thoughts about the word, which the Spirit of God desires to give you.

Read with great thoughtfulness the words of that man of faith, George Mueller. He says: `*The power of our spiritual life will be according to the measure of the room that the word of God takes up in our life and in our thoughts.'* After an experience of fifty-four years, I can solemnly declare this. For three years after my conversion I used the word little. Since that time I searched it with diligence, and the blessing was wonderful. From that time, I have read the Bible through a hundred times in order, and at every time with increasing joy. Whenever I start a fresh with it, it appears to me as a new book. I cannot express how great the blessing is of faithful, daily, regular searching of the Bible. The day is lost for me, on which I have used no rounded time for enjoying the word of God.

`Friends sometimes say: I have so much to do, that I can find no time for regular Bible study. I believe that there are few that have to work harder than I have. Yet it remains a rule with me never to begin my work until I have had real sweet fellowship with God. After that I give myself heartily to the business of the day, that is, to God's work, with only intervals of some minutes of prayer.'

The New Life

by Andrew Murray

LII. THE LORD THE PERFECTER

`I will cry unto God most High; unto God that performeth all things for me.' -- Ps. 57:2
`The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me.' -- Ps. 138:8
`Being confident of this very thing, that He which began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ.' -- Phil. 1:6
`For of Him, and through Him, and unto Him are all things. To Him be the glory for ever and ever.' -- Rom. 11:36

We read that David was once dispirited by unbelief, and said: `I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul.' So even the Christian may indeed fear that he shall one day perish. This is because he looks upon himself and what is in him, and does not set his trust wholly upon God. It is because he does not yet know God as the Perfecter. He does not yet know what is meant by His name being: `I am the Alpha and the Omega: the Beginning and the End: the First and the Last.' If I really believe in God as the beginning out of whom all is, then must I also trust Him as the continuation by whom, as also the End to whom, all is.

God is the beginning: `He who began a good work in you:' `Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you.' It is God's free choice, from before the foundation of the world, that we have to thank that we became believers, and have the new life. (John 15:16; Rom. 8:29,30; Eph. 1:4,11) Those that are still unconverted have nothing to do with this election: for them there is the offer of grace and the summons to surrender. Outside, over the door of the Father, stands the superscription: `Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out.' This every one can see and understand. No sooner are they inside the door than they see and understand the other superscription: `All that the Father giveth Me shall come to me.' (John 6:37) Then they can discern how all things are of God: first obedience to the command of God, then insight into the counsel of God.

But then it is of great moment to hold fast this truth: He has begun the good work. Then shall every thought of God strengthen the confidence that He will also perfect it. His faithfulness, His love, His power, are all pledged that He will perfect the good work that He began. Pray, read how God has taken more than one oath regarding His unchangeable faithfulness: your soul will rest in this and find courage. (Gen. 28:15; Ps. 89:29,34,35,36; Isa. 54:9,10; Jer. 33:25,26)

And how shall He finish His work? What has its origin *from* Him is sustained *by* Him, and shall one day be brought *to* Him and His glory. There is nothing in your life, temporal or spiritual, for which the Father will not care, because it has influence upon you for eternity. (Matt. 6:25,34; 1 Pet. 5:7) There is no moment of day or night in which the silent growth of your soul is not to go forward: the Father will take care of this, if you believe. There is no part of your destiny as a child of God, perhaps in things of which you have as yet not the least thought, but the Father will continue and complete His work in it. (Isa. 27:2,3; 51:12,13) Yet upon one condition. You must trust Him for this. You must in faith suffer Him to work. You must trustfully say: The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me. You must trustfully pray: I will cry unto God that performeth all things for me. Christian, pray, let your soul become full of the thought: The whole care, for the continuation and the perfecting of God's work in me, is in His hands. (Heb. 10:35; 13:5,6,20,21; 1 Pet 5:10)

And how glorious shall the perfecting not be. In our spiritual life, God is prepared to exhibit His power in making us partakers of His holiness and the image of His Son. He will make us fit, and set us in a condition for all the blessed work in His kingdom that He would have from us. Our body He will make like to the glorious body of

His Son. We may wait for the coming of the Son Himself from heaven to take His own to Him. He will unite us in one body with all His chosen, and will receive and make us dwell for ever in His glory. O how can we think that God will not perfect His work? He will surely do it, He will gloriously do it, for every one that trusts Him for it.

Child of God, pray, say in deep assurance of faith: The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me. In every need say continually with great boldness: I will call on God, that performeth all things for me. And let the song of your life be the joyful doxology: `From Him, and through Him and to Him are all things: to Him be the glory for ever. Amen.

> Lord God, who shalt perfect that which concerneth me, teach me to know Thee and to trust Thee. And let every thought of the new life go hand in hand with the joyful assurance: He who began a work in me will perfect it. Amen.

1. `He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.' It brings but little profit to begin well; we must hold the beginning of our hope firm unto the end. (Matt. 10:27; 24:13; Heb. 3:14,16; 11:12)

2. The perseverance of the saints -- in holiness -- is one of the characteristic articles of doctrine of the Reformed Church. The grace of regeneration is inadmissible.

3. How do we explain the falling away of some believers? They were only temporary believers: they were partakers only of the workings of the Spirit. (Heb. 6:4)

4. How do I know whether I am partaker of the true new birth? `As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God' (Rom. 8:14). The faith that God has received me is matured, is confirmed, by works, by a walk under the leading of the Spirit. 5. How can any one know for certain that he will persevere unto the end? By faith in God the Perfecter. We may take the Almighty God as our keeper. He that gives himself in sincerity to Him, and trusts wholly in Him to perfect His work, obtains a divine certitude that the Lord has Him, and will hold him fast unto the end.

Child of God, live in fellowship with your Father: live the life of faith in your Jesus with an undivided heart, and all fear of falling away shall be taken away from you. The living sealing of the Holy Spirit shall be your assurance of perseverance unto the end.

Divine Healing

A Series of Addresses and a Personal Testimony

by

ANDREW MURRAY
(1828-1917)

Scripture Annotated Version

Reformatted by Katie Stewart
Notes and Bold emphasis by WStS

PREFACE

The publication of this work may be regarded as a testimony of my faith in divine healing. After being stopped for more than two years in the exercise of my ministry, I was healed by the mercy of God in answer to the prayer of those who see in Him "the Lord that healeth thee" (Exodus 15:26).

This healing, granted to faith, has been the source of rich spiritual blessing to me. I have clearly seen that the Church possesses in Jesus, our Divine Healer, an inestimable treasure, which she does not yet know how to appreciate. I have been convinced anew of that which the Word of God teaches us in this matter, and of what the Lord expects of us; and I am sure that if Christians learned to realize practically the presence of the Lord that healeth, their spiritual life would thereby be developed and sanctified. I can therefore no longer keep silence, and I publish here a series of meditations, with the view of showing, according to the Word of God, that "the prayer of faith" (James 5:15) is the means appointed by God for the cure of the sick, that this truth is in perfect accord with Holy Scripture, and that the study of this truth is essential for everyone who would see the Lord manifest His power and His glory in the midst of His children. -- ANDREW MURRAY

> **WStS NOTE:** We do well to "be followers together of [Mr. Murray], and mark them which walk so as ye have [him] for an ensample" (Philippians 3:17). We have been "rooted and built up in [Christ Jesus], and stablished in the faith, as [we] have been taught" (Colossians 2:7) by the Scriptural insights shared in this volume (a book which has been a great favorite of ours for over 25 years).
>
> Even so, we respectfully must mention an additional thought which we believe to be included among those that come from "the mind of

Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16) regarding "Divine Healing." Mr. Murray has linked together the occasion of sickness in response to the condition of sin, i.e., "sin and sickness are as closely united as the body and the soul". We believe that this is entirely true of those who refuse to "walk worthy of the LORD unto all pleasing" (Colossians 1:10), whether they be those who vainly profess Christ, or those who make no boast in Him whatsoever. However, we believe that "every one that nameth the Name of Christ [and does truly] depart from iniquity" (2 Timothy 2:19), may also suffer with infirmities for reasons other than sin. (Unlike the tenacious, and still prevalent, "original sin" doctrine, we believe that a true Christian does not abide in sin, nor is any man born in sin. There is a difference between moral depravity and physical depravity. **Moral depravity is sin, or sinning**. It results from willfully choosing that which is wrong. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). Physical depravity is our inheritance from Adam's fall, a tendency for the flesh to satisfy itself. **Physical depravity is not sin**, but gives us the negative consequences that Mr. Murray associates with sickness.

> "'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one' (Job 14:4). Job remarks about the plight of man, that the run down physical condition of man (physical depravity) is passed on to the next generation of man by physical birth. Physical depravity is **not** sin. Physical depravity is the resulting run down physical condition due to the actual commission of the first sin. Spiritual death comes to all who sin. Adam was warned: 'in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die' (Genesis 2:17). Scripture makes plain about sin... commit it and die. 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die' (Ezekiel 18:20). 'The wages of sin is death' (Romans 6:23). Moral depravity is sin. Moral depravity is sinning. The flesh is the opportunity. The flesh is the occasion for sin to take place. The flesh itself is not sinful, but when we attempt to satisfy a proper desire of the flesh (i.e., procreation), when specifically told not to (i.e., 'Thou shalt not commit adultery' (Exodus 20:14), that is sin... 'for sin is the transgression of the law' (1John 3:4)... Physical depravity is the physical consequence of sin. Adam's sin had physical consequences. Physical death must now be the rule for all man. The flesh, once an occasion for good... 'And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight [the flesh], and good for food' (Genesis 2:9)... now becomes the occasion for much evil. Man's environment, as well as body, have been beat as a result of sin. This is physical depravity, which is **not** sin. However, when man obeys the normal, proper desire of the flesh, when commanded by the LORD to contain it, then man commits sin. This is moral depravity- the act of

sinning. Physical depravity precedes moral depravity, but no man has the right to say that he committed adultery because his body forced him! So it would be proper for Job to assert in Job 14:4 that a **physically** depraved human will only beget another physically depraved human." --from "" --http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perfection.html --, An Exposition of the Doctrine of Christian Perfection by Tom Stewart, --http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perf.III.html#sinful and holy --.

Mr. Murray, because of his doctrine concerning "original sin" or "sin nature," attributes all sickness to sin, either personally committed or resulting from "the preponderance of sin which weighs upon the entire human race." We agree that all sickness results from sin-- but only indirectly-- when referring to honest-hearted Christians. *Almost* all of the sickness endured in this world is because of sin. But the presence of sin need not be a factor at all, were an honest Christian to bear an infirmity. Mr. Murray agrees in Spirit, stating: God "teaches us not to accuse every sick person of sin." When dealing with an honest Christian (or, one who has "an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" [Luke 8:15]), physical infirmity can have a sanctifying effect-- diverting the Christian **from** sinning-- even as it happened for the Apostle Paul. "7 And **lest I should be** exalted above measure [Paul hadn't sinned-- 'lest I should be'] through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me **a thorn in the flesh**, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, **lest I should be** exalted above measure. 8 For this thing **I besought the LORD thrice**, that it might **depart from me**. 9 And He said unto me, My grace is **sufficient** for thee: for My strength is **made perfect in weakness**. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I **take pleasure in infirmities**, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). Of course, this example does not deny the Scriptural fact that "the LORD [is] for the body," (1 Corinthians 6:13). It was "for the body" that the "thorn in the flesh" was allowed, God thus providing a sanctifying warning for Paul to refrain from the sin of pride. While infirmities give us the opportunity to be refined, we are to "be careful (or, anxious) for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6). "Jesus Himself who is always the first, the best, the greatest Physician," as Mr. Murray so excellently affirmed, is "the LORD that **healeth** thee" (Exodus 15:26). [Please see our "" --http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/mmm --, for much more on this subject.]

Together with Paul, we "will not glory, but **in** [our] infirmities" (2 Corinthians 12:5). And that said, we hope you will be enriched and

edified by Mr. Murray's offering to the Church-- "Divine Healing."
It's a wonderful book! --Tom and Katie Stewart

CHAPTER I.

PARDON AND HEALING

"But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith He to the sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed and go unto thine house"
(Matthew 9:6).

In man two natures are combined. He is at the same time spirit and matter, heaven and earth, soul and body. For this reason, on one side he is the son of God, and on the other he is doomed to destruction because of the Fall; sin in his soul and sickness in his body bear witness to the right which death has over him. It is the twofold nature which has been redeemed by divine grace. When the Psalmist calls upon all that is within him to bless the Lord for His benefits, he cries, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, Who... forgiveth all thine iniquities, Who healeth all thy diseases" (Psalm 103:2-3). When Isaiah foretells the deliverance of his people, he adds, "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity" (Isaiah 33:24).

This prediction was accomplished beyond all anticipation when Jesus the Redeemer came down to this earth. How numerous were the healings wrought by Him who was come to establish upon earth the kingdom of heaven! Whether by His own acts or whether afterwards by the commands which He left for His disciples, does He not show us clearly that **the preaching of the Gospel and the healing of the sick went together in the salvation which He came to bring**? Both are given as evident proof of His mission as the Messiah: "The blind receive their sight and the lame walk.., and the poor have the Gospel preached to them" (Matthew 11: 5). **Jesus, who took upon Him the soul and body of man, delivers both in equal measure from the consequences of sin.**

This truth is nowhere more evident or better demonstrated than in the history of the paralytic. The Lord Jesus begins by saying to him, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," [Matthew 9:5] after which He adds, "Arise, take up thy bed and go." The pardon of sin and the healing of sickness complete one the other, for in the eyes of God, who sees our entire nature, sin and sickness are as closely united as the body and the soul. In accordance with the Scriptures, our Lord Jesus has regarded sin and sickness in another light than we have. With us sin belongs to the spiritual domain; we recognize that it is under God's just displeasure, justly condemned by Him, while sickness, on the contrary, seems only a part of the present condition of our nature, and to have nothing to do with God's condemnation and His righteousness. Some go so far as to say that sickness is a proof of the love and grace of God.

But neither the Scripture nor yet Jesus Christ Himself ever spoke of sickness in this light, nor do they ever present sickness as a blessing, as a proof of God's love which should be borne with patience. The Lord spoke to the disciples of divers sufferings which they should have to bear, but when He speaks of sickness, it is always as of an evil caused by sin and Satan, and from which we should be delivered. Very solemnly He declared that every disciple of His

would have to bear his cross (Matthew 16:24), but He never taught one sick person to resign himself to be sick. Everywhere Jesus healed the sick, everywhere He dealt with healing as one of the graces belonging to the kingdom of heaven. Sin in the soul and sickness in the body both bear witness to the power of Satan, and "the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the Devil" (I John 3:8).

Jesus came to deliver men from sin and sickness that He might make known the love of the Father. In His actions, in His teaching of the disciples, in the work of the apostles, pardon and healing are always to be found together. Either the one or the other may doubtless appear more in relief, according to the development or the faith of those to whom they spoke. Sometimes it was healing which prepared the way for the acceptance of forgiveness, sometimes it was forgiveness which preceded the healing, which, coming afterwards, became a seal to it. In the early part of His ministry, Jesus cured many of the sick, finding them ready to believe in the possibility of their healing. In this way He sought to influence hearts to receive Himself as He who is able to pardon sin. When He saw that the paralytic could receive pardon at once, He began by that which was of the greatest importance; after which came the healing which put a seal on the pardon which had been accorded to him.

We see, by the accounts given in the Gospels, that it was more difficult for the Jews at that time to believe in the pardon of their sins than in divine healing. Now it is just the contrary. The Christian Church has heard so much of the preaching of the forgiveness of sins that the thirsty soul easily receives this message of grace; but it is not the same with divine healing; that is rarely spoken of; the believers who have experienced it are not many. It is true that healing is not given in this day as in those times, to the multitudes whom Christ healed without any previous conversion. In order to receive it, it is necessary to begin by confession of sin and the purpose to live a holy life. This is without doubt the reason why people find more difficulty to believe in healing than in forgiveness; and this is also why those who receive healing receive at the same time new spiritual blessing, feel more closely united to the Lord Jesus, and learn to love and serve Him better. Unbelief may attempt to separate these two gifts, but they are always united in Christ. He is always the same Savior both of the soul and of the body, equally ready to grant pardon and healing. The redeemed may always cry: "Bless the Lord, O my soul.., Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, Who healeth all thy diseases" (Psalm 103:2-3).

CHAPTER II.

BECAUSE OF YOUR UNBELIEF

"Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall

remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you"
(Matthew 17:19-20).

When the Lord Jesus sent His disciples into different parts of Palestine, He endued them with a double power, that of casting out unclean spirits and that of healing all sickness and all infirmity (Matthew 10:1). He did the same for the seventy who came back to Him with joy, saying, "Lord, even the spirits are subject unto us through Thy Name" (Luke 10:17). On the day of the Transfiguration, while the Lord was still upon the mountain, a father brought his son who was possessed with a demon, to His disciples, beseeching them to cast out the evil spirit, but they could not. When, after Jesus had cured the child, the disciples asked Him why they had been unable to do it themselves as in other cases, He answered them, "Because of your unbelief." It was, then, their unbelief, and not the will of God which had been the cause of their defeat.

In our days divine healing is very little believed in, because it has almost entirely disappeared from the Christian Church. One may ask the reason, and here are the two answers which have been given. The greater number think that miracles, the gift of healing included, should be limited to the time of the primitive Church, that their object was to establish the first foundation of Christianity, but that from that time circumstances have altered. Other believers say unhesitatingly that if the Church has lost these gifts, it is by her own fault; it is because she has become worldly that the Spirit acts but feebly in her; it is because she has not remained in direct and habitual relation with the full power of the unseen world; but that if she were to see anew springing up within her men and women who live the life of faith and of the Holy Spirit, entirely consecrated to their God, she would see again the manifestation of the same gifts as in former times. Which of these two opinions coincides the most with the Word of God? Is it by the will of God that the "gifts of healing" [I Corinthians 12:9] have been suppressed, or is it rather man who is responsible for it? Is it the will of God that miracles should not take place? Will He in consequence of this no longer give the faith which produces them? Or again, is it the Church which has been guilty of lacking faith?

What Does the Scripture Say?

The Bible does not authorize us, either by the words of the Lord or His apostles, to believe that the gifts of healing were granted only to the early times of the Church; on the contrary, the promises which Jesus made to the apostles when He gave them instructions concerning their mission, shortly before His ascension, appear to us applicable to all times (Mark 16:15-18).

> Mark 16
> 15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.
> 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.
> 17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My Name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;
> 18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Paul places the gift of healing among the operations of the Holy Spirit.

> [1 Corinthians 12
> 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;]

James gives a precise command on this matter without any restriction of time.

> [James 5
> 13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.
> 14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord:
> 15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.
> 16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.]

The entire Scriptures declare that these graces will be granted according to the measure of the Spirit and of faith.

It is also alleged that at the outset of each new dispensation God works miracles, that it is His ordinary course of action; but it is nothing of the kind. Think of the people of God in the former dispensation, in the time of Abraham, all through the life of Moses, in the exodus from Egypt, under Joshua, in the time of the Judges and of Samuel, under the reign of David and other godly kings up to Daniel's time; during more than a thousand years miracles took place.

But, it is said, miracles were much more necessary in the early days of Christianity than later. But what about the power of heathenism even in this day, wherever the Gospel seeks to combat it? It is impossible to admit that miracles should have been more needful for the heathen in Ephesus (Acts 19:11, 12) than for the heathen of Africa in the present day.

> Acts 19
> 11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:
> 12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

And if we think of the ignorance and unbelief which reign even in the midst of the Christian nations, are we not driven to conclude that there is a need for manifest acts of the power of God to sustain the testimony of believers and to prove that God is with them? Besides, among believers themselves, how much of doubt, how much of weakness there is! How their faith needs to be awakened and stimulated by some evident proof of the presence of the Lord in their midst. One part of our being consists of flesh and blood; it is therefore in flesh and blood that God wills to manifest His presence.

In order to prove that it is the Church's unbelief which has lost the gift of healing, let us see what the Bible says about it. Does it not often put us on our guard against unbelief, against all which can estrange and turn us from our God? Does not the history of the Church show us the necessity of these warnings? Does it not furnish us with numerous examples of backward

steps, of world pleasing, in which faith grew weak in the exact measure in which the spirit of the world took the upper hand? For such **faith is only possible to him who lives in the world invisible**.

[2 Corinthians 5
7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)]

Until the third century the healings by faith in Christ were numerous, but in the centuries following they became more infrequent. Do we not know from the Bible that it is always unbelief which hinders the mighty working of God?

Oh, that we could learn to believe in the promises of God! God has not gone back from His promises; Jesus is still He who heals both soul and body; salvation offers us even now healing and holiness, and the Holy Spirit is always ready to give us some manifestations of His power. Even when we ask why this divine power is not more often seen, He answers us: "Because of your unbelief." **The more we give ourselves to experience personally sanctification by faith, the more we shall also experience healing by faith.** These two doctrines walk abreast. The more the Spirit of God lives and acts in the soul of believers, the more will the miracles multiply by which He works in the body. Thereby the world can recognize what redemption means.

CHAPTER III.

JESUS AND THE DOCTORS

"And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, when she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched His garment. For she said, If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that virtue had gone out of Him, turned Him about in the press, and said, Who touched My clothes? And His disciples said unto Him, Thou seest the multitude thronging Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me? And He looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before Him, and told Him all the truth. And He said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague"
(Mark 5:25-34).

We may be thankful to God for having given us doctors. Their vocation is one of the most noble, for a large number of them seek truly to do, with love and compassion, all they are able to alleviate the evils and sufferings which burden humanity as a result of sin. There are

even some who are zealous servants of Jesus Christ, and who seek also the good of their patients souls. Nevertheless **it is Jesus Himself who is always the first, the best, the greatest Physician**.

Jesus heals diseases in which earthly physicians can do nothing, for the Father gave Him this power when He charged Him with the work of our redemption. Jesus, in taking upon Him our human body, delivered it from the dominion of sin and Satan; He has made our bodies temples of the Holy Ghost and members of His own body (I Corinthians 6:15, 19), and even in our day how many have been given up by the doctors as incurable, how many cases of tuberculosis, of gangrene, of paralysis, of dropsy, of blindness and of deafness, have been healed by Him! Is it not then astonishing that so small a number of the sick apply to Him?

The method of Jesus is quite another than that of earthly physicians. They seek to serve God in making use of remedies which are found in the natural world, and God makes use of these remedies according to natural law, according to the natural properties of each, while the healing which proceeds from Jesus is of a totally different order; it is by divine power, the power of the Holy Ghost, that Jesus heals. Thus the difference between these two modes of healing is very marked. That we may understand it better, let us take an example; here is a physician who is an unbeliever, but extremely clever in his profession; many sick people owe their healing to him. God gives this result by means of the prescribed remedies, and the physicians knowledge of them. Here is another physician who is a believer, and who prays God's blessing on the remedies which he employs. In this case also a large number are healed, but neither in the one case nor the other does the healing bring with it any spiritual blessing. They will be preoccupied, even the believing among them, with the remedies which they use, much more than with what the Lord may be doing with them, and in such a case their healing will be more hurtful than beneficial. On the contrary, when it is Jesus only to whom the sick person applies for healing, he learns to reckon no longer upon remedies, but to put himself into direct relation with His love and His almightiness. In order to obtain such healing, he must commence by confessing and renouncing his sins, and exercising a living faith. Then healing will come directly from the Lord, who takes possession of the sick body, and it thus becomes a blessing for the soul as well as for the body.

But is it not God who has given remedies to man? it is asked. Does not their power come from Him? Without doubt; but on the other hand, is it not God who has given us His Son with all power to heal? Shall we follow the way of natural law with all those who do not yet know Christ, and also with those of His children whose faith is still too weak to abandon themselves to His almightiness; or rather do we choose the way of faith, receiving healing from the Lord and from the Holy Spirit, seeing therein the result and the proof of our redemption?

The healing which is wrought by our Lord Jesus brings with it and leaves behind it more real blessing than the healing which is obtained through physicians. Healing has been a misfortune to more persons than one. On a bed of sickness serious thoughts had taken possession, but from the time of his healing how often has a sick man been found anew far from the Lord! It is not thus when it is Jesus who heals. Healing is granted after confession of sin; therefore it brings the sufferer nearer to Jesus, and establishes a new link between him and the Lord, it causes him to experience His love and power, it begins within him a new life of faith and holiness. When the woman who had touched the hem of Christ's garment felt that she was healed, she learned something of what divine love means. She went away with the

words: "Daughter, thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace" (Mark 5:34).

O you who are suffering from some sickness, know that Jesus the sovereign Healer is yet in our midst. He is close to us, and He is giving anew to His Church manifest proofs of His presence. Are you ready to break with the world, to abandon yourself to Him with faith and confidence? Then fear not, remember that divine healing is a part of the life of faith. If nobody around you can help you in prayer, if no elder is at hand to pray the prayer of faith, fear not to go yourself to the Lord in the silence of solitude, like the woman who touched the hem of His garment. Commit to Him the care of your body. Get quiet before Him and like the poor woman say, I will be healed. Perhaps it may take some time to break the chains of your unbelief, but assuredly none that wait on Him shall be ashamed. "Yea, let none that wait on Thee be ashamed" (Psalm 25:3).

CHAPTER IV.

HEALTH AND SALVATION BY THE NAME OF JESUS

"And His Name through faith in His Name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all... Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Whom ye crucified, Whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole... Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"
(Acts 3:16; 4:10,12).

When after Pentecost, the paralytic was healed through Peter and John at the gate of the temple, it was in "the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth" that they said to him, "Rise up and walk," [Acts 3:6] and as soon as the people in their amazement ran together to them, Peter declared that it was the name of Jesus which had so completely healed the man.

As the result of this miracle and of Peters discourse, many people who had heard the Word believed (Acts 4: 4).

> Acts 4
> 4 Howbeit many of them which heard the Word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.

On the morrow Peter repeated these words before the Sanhedrin, "By the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth... doth this man stand here before you whole;" and then he added, "There is none other name under heaven... whereby we must be saved." This statement of Peter's declares to us that **the name of Jesus both heals and saves. We have here a teaching of the highest import for divine healing**.

We see that healing and health form part of Christ's salvation. Does not Peter clearly state this in his discourse to the Sanhedrin where, having spoken of healing, he immediately goes on to speak of salvation by Christ? (Acts 4:10,12). In heaven even our bodies will have their part in salvation; salvation will not be complete for us until our bodies shall enjoy the full redemption of Christ. Why then should we not believe in this work of redemption here below? Even already here on earth, the health of our bodies is a fruit of the salvation which Jesus has acquired for us.

We see also that health as well as salvation is to be obtained by faith. The tendency of man by nature is to bring about his salvation by his works, and it is only with difficulty that he comes to receive it by faith; but when it is a question of the healing of the body, he has still more difficulty in seizing it. As to salvation, he ends it by accepting it because by no other means can he open the door of heaven; while for the body, he makes use of well-known remedies. Why then should he seek for divine healing? Happy is he who comes to understand that it is the will of God; that God wills to manifest the power of Jesus, and also to reveal to us His Fatherly love; to exercise and to confirm our faith, and to make us prove the power of redemption in the body as well as in the soul. The body is part of our being; even the body has been saved by Christ; therefore it is in our body that our Father wills to manifest the power of redemption, and to let men see that Jesus lives. Oh, let us believe in the name of Jesus! Was it not in the name of Jesus that perfect health was given to the impotent man? And were not these words: Thy faith hath saved thee, pronounced when the body was healed? Let us seek then to obtain divine healing.

Wherever the Spirit acts with power, there He works divine healings. Would it not seem that if ever miracles Were superfluous, it was at Pentecost, for then the word of the apostles worked mightily, and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit was abundant? Well, it is precisely because the Spirit acted powerfully that His working must needs be Visible in the body. If divine healing is seen but rarely in our day, we can attribute it to no other cause than that the Spirit does not act with power. The unbelief of worldlings and the want of zeal among believers stop His working. The healings which God is giving here and there are the precursory signs of all the spiritual graces which are promised to us, and it is only the Holy Spirit who reveals the almightiness of the name of Jesus to operate such healings. Let us pray earnestly for the Holy Spirit, let us place ourselves unreservedly under His direction, and let us seek to be firm in our faith in the name of Jesus, whether for preaching salvation or for the work of healing.

God grants healing to glorify the name of Jesus. Let us seek to be healed by Jesus that His name may be glorified. It is sad to see how little the power of His name is recognized, how little it is the end of preaching and of prayer. Treasures of divine grace, of which Christians deprive themselves by their lack of faith and zeal, are hidden in the name of Jesus. It is the will of God to glorify His Son in the Church; and He will do it wherever He finds faith. Whether among believers, or whether among the heathen, He is ready with virtue from on high to awaken consciences, and to bring hearts to obedience. God is ready to manifest the all-power of His Son, and to do it in a striking way in body as well as in soul. Let us believe it for ourselves, let us believe it for others, for the circle of believers around us, and also for the Church in the whole world. Let us give ourselves to believe with firm faith in the power

of the name of Jesus, let us ask great things in His name, counting on His promise, and we shall see God still do wonders by the name of His holy Son.

CHAPTER V.

NOT BY OUR OWN POWER

"And when Peter saw it he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?"
(Acts 3:12).

As soon as the impotent man had been healed at the gate of the temple through Peter and John, the people ran together unto them. Peter, seeing this miracle was attributed to their power and holiness, loses no time in setting them right by telling them that all the glory of this miracle belongs to Jesus, and that it is He in whom we must believe.

Peter and John were undoubtedly full of faith and of holiness; perhaps even they may have been the most holy and zealous servants of God in their time, otherwise God might not have chosen them as instruments in this case of healing. But they knew that their holiness of life was not of themselves, that it was of God through the Holy Spirit. They think so little of themselves that they ignore their own holiness and know only one thing that all power belongs to their Master. They hasten, then, to declare that in this thing they count for nothing, that it is the work of the Lord alone. **This is the object of divine healing: to be a proof of the power of Jesus**, a witness in the eyes of men of what He is, proclaiming His divine intervention, and attracting hearts to Him. Not "by our own power or holiness." Thus is becomes those to speak whom the Lord is pleased to use in helping others by their faith.

It is necessary to insist on this because of the tendency of believers to think the contrary. Those who have recovered their health in answer to "the prayer of faith" [James 5:15], "the supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working" (James 5:16, RV), are in danger of being too much occupied with the human instrument which God is pleased to employ, and to think that the power lies in mans piety.

Doubtless the prayer of faith is the result of real godliness, but those who possess it will be the first to acknowledge that it does not come from themselves, nor from any effort of their own. They fear to rob the Lord of the least particle of the glory which belongs to Him, and they know that if they do so, they will compel Him to withdraw His grace from them. It is their great desire to see the souls which God has blessed through them enter into a direct and increasingly intimate communion with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, since that is the result which their healing should produce. Thus they insist that it is not caused by their own power or holiness.

Such testimony on their part is necessary to reply to the erroneous accusations of unbelievers. The Church of Christ needs to hear clearly announced that it is on account of her worldliness and unbelief that she has lost these spiritual gifts of healing (I Corinthians 12: 9) and that the Lord restores to those who, with faith and obedience, have consecrated their lives to Him.

> 1 Corinthians 12
> 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

This grace cannot reappear without being preceded by a renewal of faith and of holiness. But then, says the world, and with it a large number of Christians, You are laying claim to the possession of a higher order of faith and holiness, you consider yourselves holier than others. To such accusations this word of Peter is the only reply before God and man, confirmed by a life of deep and real humility: Not "by our own power or holiness." "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory, for Thy mercy and for Thy truth's sake" (Psalm 115:1). Such a testimony is also necessary in view of our own heart and of the wiles of Satan. As long as, through the Church's unfaithfulness, the gifts of healing are but rarely given, those children of God who have received these gifts are in danger of priding themselves upon them, and of imagining that they have in themselves something exceptionally meritorious. The enemy does not forget to persecute them by such insinuations, and woe unto them if they listen to him. They are not ignorant of his Y devices; therefore they need to pray continually to the Lord to keep them in humility, the true means of obtaining continually more grace. If they persevere in humility, they will recognize that the more God makes use of them, the more also will they be penetrated with the conviction that it is God alone who works by them, and that all the glory belongs to Him. "Not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (I Corinthians 15:10). Such is their watchword.

Finally, this testimony is useful for the feeble ones who long for salvation, and who desire to receive Christ as their Healer. They hear of full consecration and entire obedience, but they form a false idea of it. They think they must in themselves attain to a high degree of knowledge and of perfection, and they fall a prey to discouragement. No, no; **it is not by our own power or holiness that we obtain these graces, but by a faith quite simple, a childlike faith, which knows that it has no power nor holiness of its own, and which commits itself completely to Him who is faithful, and whose almightiness can fulfill His promise.** Oh, let us not seek to do or to be anything of ourselves! It is only as we feel our own powerlessness, and expect all from God and His Word that we realize the glorious way in which the Lord heals sickness by faith in his name.

CHAPTER VI.

ACCORDING TO THE MEASURE OF FAITH

"And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour"
(Matthew 8:13).

This passage of Scripture brings before us one of the principal laws of the kingdom of heaven. In order to understand God's ways with His people, and our relations with the Lord, it is needful to understand this law thoroughly and not to deviate from it. Not only does God give or withhold His gifts according to the faith or unbelief of each, but they are granted in greater or lesser measure, only in proportion to the faith which receives them. God respects the right to decide which He has conferred on man. Therefore He can only bless us in the measure in which each yields himself up to His divine working, and opens all his heart to Him. Faith in God is nothing else than the full opening of the heart to receive everything from God; therefore man can only receive divine grace according to his faith; and this applies as much to divine healing as to any other grace of God.

This truth is confirmed by the spiritual blessings which may result from sickness. Two questions are often asked:

- (1) Is it not God's will that His children should sometimes remain in a prolonged state of sickness?

- (2) Since it is a recognized thing that divine healing brings with it greater spiritual blessing than the sickness itself, why does God allow certain of His children to continue sick through many years, and while in this condition give them blessing in sanctification, and in communion with Himself?

The answer to these two questions is that God gives to His children according to their faith. We have already had occasion to remark that in the same degree in which the Church has become worldly, her faith in divine healing has diminished until at last it has disappeared. Believers do not seem to be aware that they may ask God for the healing of their sickness, and that thereby they may be sanctified and fitted for His service. They have come to seek only submission to His will and to regard sickness as a means to be separate from the world. In such conditions the Lord gives them what they ask. He would have been ready to give them yet more, to grant them healing in answer to the prayer of faith, but they lacked the faith to receive it. God always meets His children where they are, howsoever weak they may be. The sick ones, therefore, who have desired to receive Him with their whole heart, will have received from Him the fruit of the sickness in their desire that their will should be conformed to the will of God. They might have been able to receive healing, in addition, as a proof that God accepted their submission; if this has not been so, it is because faith has failed them to ask for it.

"As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." These words give the reply to yet another question:

- (3) How can you say that divine healing brings with it so much of spiritual blessing, when one sees that the greater number of those who were healed by the Lord Jesus

received nothing more than a deliverance from their present sufferings, without giving any proof that they were also spiritually blessed?

Here again, as they believed, so was it done unto them.

A good number of sick people, having witnessed the healing of others, gained confidence in Jesus just far enough to be healed, and Jesus granted them their request, without adding other blessings for their souls. Before His ascension the Lord had not as free an entrance as He now has into the heart of man, because "the Holy Ghost was not yet given" (John 7:39). The healing of the sick was then hardly more than a blessing for the body. It was only later, in the dispensation of the Spirit, that the conviction and confession of sin have become for the believer the first grace to be received, the essential condition for obtaining healing, as St. Paul tells us in his Epistle to the Corinthians, and James in his to the twelve tribes scattered abroad (I Corinthians 11:31,32; James 5:16).

1 Corinthians 11
31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.
32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

James 5
16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Thus the degree of spiritual grace which it is possible for us to receive depends upon the measure of our faith, whether it be for its external manifestation, or especially whether for its influence upon our inner life.

We recommend for every suffering one who is looking for healing, and who seeks to know Jesus as his divine Healer, not to let himself be hindered by his unbelief, not to doubt the promises of God, and thus to be strong in faith giving glory to God as is His due. "As thou hast believed so be it done unto thee." If with all your heart you trust in the living God you will be abundantly blessed; do not doubt it.

The part of faith is always to lay hold on just that which appears impossible or strange to human eyes. Let us be willing to be considered fools for Christ's sake (I Corinthians 4:10).

1 Corinthians 4
10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised.

Let us not fear to pass for weak-minded in the eyes of the world and of such Christians as are ignorant of these things, because, **on the authority of the Word of God, we believe** that which others cannot yet admit. Do not, then, let yourself be discouraged in your expectation even though God should delay to answer you, or if your sickness be aggravated. Once having placed your foot firmly on the immovable rock of God's own Word, and having prayed the Lord to manifest His almightiness in your body because you are one of the members of His Body, and the temple of the Holy Ghost, persevere in believing in Him with the firm

assurance that He has undertaken for you, that He has made Himself responsible for your body, and that His healing virtue will come to glorify Him in you.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WAY OF FAITH

"And straightway the father of the child cried out and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief"
(Mark 9:24).

These words have been a help and strength to thousands of souls in their pursuit of salvation and the gifts of God. Notice that it is in relation to an afflicted child that they were pronounced, in the fight of faith when seeking healing from the Lord Jesus. In them we see that in one and the same soul there can arise a struggle between faith and unbelief, and that it is not without a struggle that we come to believe in Jesus and in His all-power to heal the sick. In this we find the needful encouragement for realizing the Saviors power.

> [**WStS Note:** Concerning Mr. Murray's phrase: "a struggle between faith and unbelief", we wish to comment. A honest Christian may have "a struggle between faith and unbelief", but not between faith and the "sin" of unbelief. This "struggle" to *establish a position of faith* would simply be an honest *lack of faith,* (i.e., 'your faith groweth exceedingly' (2 Thessalonians 1:3).). When an established position of faith turns back in unbelief, that is sin. "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). Faith and sin cannot reside in the same vessel at the same time.
>
>> "Sin, like faith, is an act of the will, but in opposition to and to the exclusion of faith. 'Whatsoever is not of faith is sin' (Romans 14:23). It is an impossibility to be both holy and sinful *at the same time,* just as it is impossible to be dwelling in faith and sin *in the same moment,* e.g., Charles G. Finney labelled this concept, the Unity of Moral Action. [Please read '' -- http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Unity.of.Moral.Action.html -- by Charles G. Finney] 'No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the One, and love the other; or else he will hold to the One, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon' (Luke 16:13)."
>> --from "" -- http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Must.We.Then.Sin.html --, by Tom Stewart]

I speak here especially to sufferers who do not doubt the power or the will of the Lord Jesus to heal in this day without the use of earthly remedies, but who lack the boldness to accept healing for themselves. They believe in the divine power of Christ, they believe in a general manner His good will to heal; they have acquired, either by the Scriptures, or by facts of

healings by the Lord alone which have taken place in our days, the intellectual persuasion that the Lord can help even them, but they shrink back from accepting healing, and from saying with faith, The Lord has heard me, I know that He is healing me.

Take notice first that without faith no one can be healed. When the father of the afflicted child said to Jesus, If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us, Jesus replied: "If thou canst believe." [Mark 9:23] Jesus had the power to heal and He was ready to do it, but He casts responsibility on the man. "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." [Mark 9:23] In order to obtain your healing from Jesus, it is not enough to pray. Prayer without faith is powerless. It is "the prayer of faith" which saves the sick (James 5:15). If you have already asked for healing from the Lord, or if others have asked it for you, you must, before you are conscious of any change, be able to say with faith, On the authority of God's Word I have the assurance that He hears me and that I shall be healed. To have faith means in your case to surrender your body absolutely into the Lord's hands, and to leave yourself entirely to Him. Faith receives healing as a spiritual grace which proceeds from the Lord even while there is no conscious change in the body. Faith can glorify God and say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul... Who healeth all [my] diseases" (Psalm 103:1-3). The Lord requires this faith that He may heal.

> Psalm 103
> 1 Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His Holy Name.
> 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits:
> 3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; Who healeth all thy diseases;

But how is such faith to be obtained? Tell your God the unbelief which you find in your heart,. and count on Him for deliverance from it. [WStS: Not the "sin" of unbelief, but simply an honest lack of faith.] Faith is not money by which your healing can be purchased from the Lord. It is He who desires to awaken and develop in you the necessary faith. "Help Thou mine unbelief," cried the father of the child. It was his ardent desire that his faith should not come short. Confess to the Lord all the difficulty you have to believe Him on the ground of His Word; tell Him you want to be rid of this unbelief, that you bring it to Him with a will to hearken only to His Word. Do not lose time in deploring your unbelief, but look to Jesus. The light of His countenance will enable you to find the power to believe in Him (Psalm 44:3).

> Psalm 43
> 3 O send out Thy Light and Thy Truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles.

He calls on you to trust in Him; listen to Him, and by His grace faith will triumph in you. Say to Him, Lord, I am still aware of the unbelief which is in me. I find it difficult to believe that I am sure of my healing because I possess Him who works it. And, nevertheless, I want to conquer this unbelief. Thou, Lord, wilt give me the victory. I desire to believe, I will believe, by Thy grace I dare to say I can believe. Yes, Lord, I believe, for Thou comest to the help of my unbelief. It is when we are in intimate communion with the Lord, and when our heart responds to His, that unbelief is overcome and conquered. [WStS: Not the "sin" of unbelief, but simply an honest lack of faith.]

It is needful also to testify to the faith one has. Be resolved to believe that which the Lord says to you, to believe, above all, that which He is. Lean wholly upon His promises. "The

prayer of faith shall save the sick" [James 5:15]. "I am the Lord that healeth thee" (Exodus 15:26). Look to Jesus, who "bare our sicknesses" (Matthew 8:17), and who healed all who came to Him; count on the Holy Spirit to manifest in your heart the presence of Jesus who is also now in heaven, and to work also in your body the power of His grace. Praise the Lord without waiting to feel better, or to have more faith. Praise Him, and say with David, "O Lord, my God, I cried unto Thee, and Thou hast healed me" (Psalm 30:2). Divine healing is a spiritual grace which can only be received spiritually and by faith, before feeling its effect on the body. Accept it, then, and give glory to God. When the Lord Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the child, he rent him sore, so that "he was as one dead," inasmuch as "many said, 'He is dead'" [Mark 9:26]. If, therefore, your sickness does not yield at once, if Satan and your own unbelief attempt to get the upper hand, do not heed them, cling closely to Jesus your Healer, and He will surely heal you.

CHAPTER VIII.

YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST

"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid... What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's"
(I Corinthians 6:15, 19-20).

The Bible teaches us that the Body of Christ is the company of the faithful. These words are taken generally in their spiritual sense, while the Bible asks us positively whether we know not that our bodies are the members of Christ. In the same way, when the Bible speaks of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit or of Christ, we limit His presence to the spiritual part of our being. Nevertheless the Bible says expressly, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" When the Church understands that the body also has part in the redemption which is by Christ, by which it ought to be brought back to its original destiny, to be the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, to serve as His instrument, to be sanctified by His presence, she will also recognize all the place which divine healing has in the Bible and in the counsels of God.

The account of the creation tells us that man is composed of three parts. God first formed the body from the dust of the earth, after which He breathed into it "the breath of life" [Genesis 2:7]. He caused His own life, His Spirit, to enter into it. By this union of Spirit with matter, the man became a "living soul" [2:7]. The soul, which is essentially the man, finds its place between the body and the spirit; it is the link which binds them together. By the body the soul finds itself in relation to the external world; by the spirit, with the world invisible and with God. By means of the soul, the spirit can subject the body to the action of the heavenly

powers and thus spiritualize it; by means of the soul, the body also can act upon the spirit and attract it earthwards. The soul, subject to the solicitations of both spirit and body, is in a position to choose between the voice of God, speaking by the Spirit, or the voice of the world, speaking through the senses.

This union of spirit and body forms a combination which is unique in the creation; it makes man to be the jewel of God's work. Other creatures had existed already; some, like angels, were all spirit, without any material body, and others, like the animals, were only flesh, possessing a body animated with a living soul, but devoid of spirit. Man was destined to show that the material body, governed by the spirit, was capable of being transformed by the power of the Spirit of God, and of being thus led to participate of heavenly glory.

We know what sin and Satan have done with this possibility of gradual transformation. By means of the body, the spirit was tempted, seduced, and became a slave of sense. We know also what God has done to destroy the work of Satan and to accomplish the purpose of creation. "The Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the Devil" (I John 3:8). God prepared a body for His Son (Hebrews 10:5).

> Hebrews 10
> 5 Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me:

"The Word was made flesh" (John 1:14). "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). "Who His Own Self bare our sins in His Own Body on the tree" (I Peter 2:24). And now Jesus, raised up from the dead with a body as free from sin as His spirit and His soul, communicates to our body the virtue of His glorified body. The Lord's Supper is "the communion of the body of Christ"; and our bodies are "the members of Christ" (I Corinthians 10:16; 6:15; 12:27).

> 1 Corinthians
> 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?
> 6:15 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.
> 12:27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Faith puts us in possession of all that the death of Christ and His resurrection have procured for us, and it is not only in our spirit and our soul that the life of the risen Jesus manifests its presence here below; it is in the body also that it would act according to the measure of our faith.

"Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?" Many believers represent to themselves that the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in our body as we dwell in a house. Nothing of the kind. I can dwell in a house without its becoming part of my being. I may leave it without suffering; no vital union exists between my house and me. It is not thus with the presence of our soul and spirit in our body. The life of a plant lives in and pervades every part of it; and our soul is not limited to dwell in such or such part of the body, the heart or the head, for instance, but penetrates throughout, even to the end of the lowest members. The life of the soul pervades the whole body; the life throughout proves the presence of the soul. It is

in like manner that the Holy Ghost comes to dwell in our body. He penetrates its entirety. He animates and possesses us infinitely more than we can imagine.

In the same way in which the Holy Spirit brings to our soul and spirit the life of Jesus, His holiness, His joy, His strength, He comes also to impart to the sick body all the vigorous vitality of Christ as soon as the hand of faith is stretched out to receive it. When the body is fully subject to Christ, crucified with Him, renouncing all self-will and independence, desiring nothing but to be the Lord's temple, it is then that the Holy Spirit manifests the power of the risen Savior in the body. Then only can we glorify God in our body, leaving Him full freedom to manifest therein His power, to show that He knows how to set His temple free from the domination of sickness, sin, and Satan.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BODY FOR THE LORD

"Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body"
(I Corinthians 6:13).

One of the most learned of theologians has said that corporeity is the end of the ways of God. As we have already seen, this is indeed what God has accomplished in creating man. It is this which makes the inhabitants of heaven wonder and admire when they contemplate the glory of the Son. Clothed with a human body, Jesus has taken His place forever upon the throne of God, to partake of His glory. It is this which God has willed. It shall be recognized in that day when regenerated humanity, forming the body of Christ, shall be truly and visibly the temple of the living God (I Corinthians 6:19), and when all creation in the new heavens and new earth shall share the glory of the children of God. The material body shall then be wholly sanctified, glorified by the Spirit; and this body, thus spiritualized, shall be the highest glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and of His redeemed.

> 1 Corinthians 6
> 19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

It is in anticipation of this new condition of things that the Lord attaches a great importance to the indwelling and sanctification of our bodies, down here, by His Spirit. So little is this truth understood by believers that less still do they seek for the power of the Holy Spirit in their bodies. Many of them also, believing that this body belongs to them, use it as it pleases them. Not understanding how much the sanctification of the soul and spirit depends upon the body, they do not grasp all the meaning of the words, "The body is... for the Lord," in such a way as to receive them in obedience.

"The body is... for the Lord." What does this mean? The apostle has just said, "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God shall destroy both it and them." Eating and drinking afford the Christian an opportunity of carrying out this truth, "The body is... for the Lord." He must indeed learn to eat and drink to the glory of God. By eating, sin and the Fall came about. It was also through eating that the devil sought to tempt our Lord. Thus Jesus Himself sanctified His body in eating only according to the will of His Father (Matthew 4:4).

> Matthew 4
> 4 But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Many believers fail to watch over their bodies fail to observe a holy sobriety so as to avoid rendering their bodies unfit for the service of God. Eating and drinking should never impede communion with God; their purpose is, rather, to facilitate communion by maintaining the body in its normal condition.

The apostle speaks also of fornication, this sin which defiles the body, and which is in direct opposition to the words, "The body is... for the Lord." It is not simply incontinence outside the married state, but in that state also, which is meant here; all voluptuousness, all want of sobriety of whatsoever kind is condemned in these words: "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost" (I Corinthians 6:19). In the same way, all of what goes to maintain the body to clothe it, strengthen it, rest it in sleep, or afford it enjoyment should be placed under the control of the Holy Spirit. As under the Old Covenant, the temple was constructed solely for God, and for His service, even so our body has been created for the Lord and for Him alone.

One of the chief benefits then of divine healing will be to teach us that our body ought to be set free from the yoke of our own will to become the Lord's property. **God does not grant healing to our prayers until He has attained the end for which He has permitted the sickness. He wills that this discipline should bring us into a more intimate communion with Him**; He would make us understand that we have regarded our body as our own property, while it belonged to the Lord; and that the Holy Spirit seeks to sanctify all its actions. He leads us to understand that if we yield our body unreservedly to the influence of the Holy Spirit, we shall experience His power in us, and He will heal us by bringing into our body the very life of Jesus; He leads us, in short, to say with full conviction, "The body is... for the Lord."

There are believers who seek after holiness, but only for the soul and spirit. In their ignorance they forget that the body and all its systems of nerves that the hand, the ear, the eyes, the mouth are called to testify directly to the presence and the grace of God in them. They have not sufficiently taken in these words:

> "Your bodies are the members of Christ" (I Corinthians 6:15).
>
> "If by the Spirit ye make to die the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:13, RV, margin).
>
> "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit

> and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thessalonians 5:23).

Oh, what a renewing takes place in us when, by His own touch, the Lord heals our bodies, when He takes possession of them, and when by His Spirit He becomes life and health to them! It is with an indescribable consciousness of holiness, of fear and of joy that the believer can then offer his body a living sacrifice to receive healing, and to have for his motto these words: "The body is... for the Lord."

CHAPTER X.

THE LORD FOR THE BODY

"Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body"
(I Corinthians 6:13).

There is reciprocity in God's relations with man. That which God has been for me, I ought in my turn to be for Him. And that which I am for Him, He desires again to be for me. If, in His love, He gives Himself fully to me, it is in order that I may lovingly give myself fully to Him. In the measure in which I more or less really surrender to Him all my being, in that measure also He gives Himself more really to me. God thus leads the believer to understand that this abandonment of Himself involves the body, and the more our life bears witness that "the body is... for the Lord," the more also we experience that the Lord is for the body. In saying, "The Lord [is] for the body," we express the desire to regard our body as wholly consecrated, offered in sacrifice to the Lord, and sanctified by Him. In saying, "The Lord [is] for the body," we express the precious certainty that our offering has been accepted, and that, **by His Spirit, the Lord will impart to our body His own strength and holiness, and that henceforth He will strengthen and keep us.**

This is a matter of faith. Our body is material, weak, feeble, sinful, mortal. Therefore it is difficult to grasp all at once the full extent of the words, "The Lord [is] for the body." It is the Word of God which explains to us the way to assimilate. The body was created by the Lord and for the Lord. Jesus took upon Him an earthly body. In His body He bore our sins on the cross, and thereby set our body free from the power of sin. In Christ the body has been raised again, and seated on the throne of God. The body is the habitation of the Holy Spirit; it is called to eternal partnership in the glory of heaven. Therefore, with certainty, and in a wide and universal sense, we can say, "Yes, the Lord Jesus, our Savior, is 'for the body.'"

This truth has many applications.

- In the first place, it is a great help in practical holiness. More than one sin derives its strength from some physical tendency. The converted drunkard has a horror for intoxicating drinks, but, notwithstanding, his appetites are sometimes a snare to him, gaining victory over his new convictions. If, however, in the conflict he gives over his body with confidence to the Lord, all physical appetite, all desire to drink will be overcome. Our temper also often results from our physical constitution. A nervous, irritable system produces words which are sharp, harsh, and wanting in love. But let the body with this physical tendency be taken to the Lord, and it will soon be experienced that the Holy Spirit can mortify the risings of impatience, and sanctify the body, rendering it blameless.

- These words, "The Lord [is] for the body," are applicable also to the physical strength which the Lord's service demands of us. When David cries, "It is God that girdeth me with strength" [Psalm 18:32], he means physical strength, for he adds: "He maketh my feet like hinds' feet... a bow of steel is broken by mine arms" (Psalm 18:33-34). Again in these words: "The Lord is the strength of my life" (Psalm 27:1), it does not mean only the spiritual man but the entire man. Many believers have experienced that the promise, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength" (Isaiah 40:31), touches the body, and that the Holy Spirit increases the physical strength.

- But it is especially in divine healing that we see the truth of these words: "The Lord [is] for the body." Yes, Jesus, the sovereign and merciful Healer, is always ready to save and cure. There was in Switzerland, some years ago, a young girl with tuberculosis and near death. The doctor had advised a milder climate, but she was too weak to take the journey. She learned that Jesus is the Healer of the sick. She believed the good news, and one night when she was thinking of this subject it seemed to her that the body of the Lord drew near to her, and that she ought to take these words literally, "His body for our body." From this moment she began to improve. Some time after she began to hold Bible readings, and later on she become a zealous and much-blessed worker for the Lord among women. She had learned to understand that "the Lord [is] for the body."

Dear sick one, the Lord has shown thee by sickness what power sin has over the body. By thy healing He would also show thee the power of redemption of the body. He calls thee to show that which thou hast not understood hitherto, that "the body is... for the Lord." Therefore give Him thy body. Give it Him with thy sickness and with the sin, which is the original source of sickness. Believe always that the Lord has taken charge of this body, and He will manifest with power that He really is the Lord, who is "for the body." The Lord, who has Himself taken upon Him a body here on earth and regenerated it, from the highest heaven, where He now is, clothed with His glorified body, sends us His divine strength, willing thus to manifest His power in our body.

CHAPTER XI.

DO NOT CONSIDER YOUR BODY

"I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death"
(Romans 6:19-21).

When God promised to give Abraham a son, the patriarch would never have been able to believe in this promise if he had considered his own body, already aged and worn out. However, he would see nothing but God and His promise, the power and faithfulness of God who guaranteed him the fulfillment of His promise.

This enables us to lay hold of all the difference there is between the healing which is expected from earthly remedies and the healing which is looked for from God only. When we have recourse to remedies for healing, all the attention of the sick one is upon the body, considering the body, while divine healing calls us to turn away our attention from the body, and to abandon ourselves, soul and body, to the Lord's care, occupying ourselves with Him alone.

This truth equally enables us to see the difference between the sickness retained for blessing and the healing received from the Lord. Some are afraid to take the promise in James 5 in its literal sense, because they say sickness is more profitable to the soul than health.

> James 5
> 16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

It is true that in the case of healing obtained by earthly remedies, many people would be more blessed in remaining ill than in recovering health, but it is quite otherwise when healing comes directly from the hand of God. In order to receive divine healing, sin must be so truly confessed and renounced, one must be so completely surrendered to the Lord, self must be so really yielded up to be wholly in His hands, and the will of Jesus to take charge of the body must be so firmly counted on that the healing becomes the commencement of a new life of intimate communion with the Lord.

Thus we learn to give up to Him entirely the care of the health, and **the smallest indication of the return of the evil is regarded as a warning** not to consider our body, but to be occupied with the Lord only.

What a contrast this is from the greater number of sick people who look for healing from remedies. If some few of them have been sanctified by the sickness, having learned to lose sight of themselves, how many more are there who are drawn by the sickness itself to be constantly occupied with themselves and with the condition of their body. What infinite care they exercise in observing the least symptom, favorable or unfavorable! What a constant

preoccupation to them is their eating and drinking, the anxiety to avoid this or that! How much they are taken up with what they consider due to them from others, whether they are sufficiently thought of, whether well enough nursed, whether visited often enough! How much time is thus devoted to considering the body and what it exacts, rather than **the Lord and the relations which He seeks to establish with their souls!** Oh, how many are they who, through sickness, are occupied almost exclusively with themselves!

All this is totally different when healing is looked for in faith from the loving God. Then the first thing to learn is to cease to be anxious about the state of your body, you have trusted it to the Lord and He has taken the responsibility. If you do not see a rapid improvement immediately, but on the contrary the symptoms appear to be more serious, remember that you have entered on a path of faith, and therefore you ought not to consider the body, but cling only to the living God. The commandment of Christ, "Be not anxious for your... body" (Matthew 6:25, ASV), appears here in a new light. When God called Abraham not to consider his own body, it was that He might call him to the greatest exercise of faith which could be, that he might learn to see only God and His promise. Sustained by his faith, he gave glory to God, convinced that God would do what He had promised. Divine healing is a marvelous tie to bind us to the Lord. At first one may fear to believe that the Lord will stretch forth His mighty hand and touch the body; but in studying the Word of God the soul takes courage and confidence. At last one decides, saying, "I yield up my body into the hands of God; and I leave the care of it to Him." Then the body and its sensations are lost sight of, and only the Lord and His promise are in view.

Dear reader, wilt thou also enter upon this way of faith, very superior to that which it is the habit to call natural? Walk in the steps of Abraham. Learn from him not to consider thine own body, and not to doubt through unbelief. To consider the body gives birth to doubts, while clinging to the promise of God and being occupied with Him alone gives entrance into the way of faith, the way of divine healing, which glorifies God.

CHAPTER XII.

DISCIPLINE AND SANCTIFICATION

"If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?... God chasteneth us for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness"
(Hebrews 12:7, 10).

"If a man... purge himself... he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work"
(II Timothy 2:21).

To sanctify anything is to set apart, to consecrate, to God and to His service. The temple at Jerusalem was holy, that is to say, it was consecrated, dedicated to God that it might serve Him as a dwelling place. The vessels of the temple were holy, because they were devoted to the service of the temple; the priests were holy, chosen to serve God and ready to work for Him. In the same way the Christian ought also to be sanctified, at the Lord's disposal, ready to do every good work.

When the people of Israel went out of Egypt, the Lord reclaimed them for His service as a holy people. Let my people go that they may serve me (Exodus 7:16), He said to Pharaoh. Set free from their hard bondage, the children of Israel were debtors to enter at once upon the service of God, and to become His happy servants. Their deliverance was the road which led to their sanctification.

Again in this day, God is forming for Himself a holy people, and it is that we may torn part of them that Jesus sets us free. He "gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14, ASV). It is the Lord who breaks the chains by which Satan would hold us in bondage. He would have us free, wholly free to serve Him. He wills to save us, to deliver both the soul and the body, that each of the members of the body may be consecrated to Him and placed unreservedly at His disposal.

A large number of Christians do not yet understand all this, they do not know how to take in that the purpose of their deliverance is that they may be sanctified, prepared to serve their God. They make use of their life and their members to procure their own satisfaction; consequently they do not feel at liberty to ask for healing with faith. It is therefore to chasten them that they may be brought to desire sanctification that the Lord permits Satan to inflict sickness upon them and by it keep them chained and prisoners (Luke 13:11,16).

> Luke 13
> 11 And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.
> 16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?

God chastens us "for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness," (Hebrews 12:10), and that we may be sanctified, "meet for the Master's use" (II Timothy 2:21).

The discipline which inflicts the sickness brings great blessings with it. It is a call to the sick one to reflect; it leads him to see that God is occupied with him, and seeks to show him what there is which still separates him from Himself. God speaks to him, He calls him to examine his ways, **to acknowledge that he has lacked holiness, and that the purpose of the chastisement is to make him partaker of His holiness**. He awakens within him the desire to be enlightened by the Holy Spirit down into the inmost recesses of his heart, that he may be enabled to get a clear idea of what his life has been up to the present time, a life of self-will, very unlike the holy life which God requires of him. He leads him to confess his sins, to entrust them to the Lord Jesus, to believe that the Savior can deliver him from them. He urges him to yield to Him, to consecrate his life to Him, to die to himself that he may be able to live unto God.

Sanctification is not something which you can accomplish yourself; it cannot even be produced by God in you as something which you can possess and contemplate in yourself. No, it is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of holiness alone who can communicate His holiness to you and renew it continually. Therefore it is by faith you can become partakers of his holiness. Having understood that Jesus has been made unto you of God sanctification (I Corinthians 1:30),

> 1 Corinthians 1
> 30 But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

and that it is the Holy Spirits work to impart to you His holiness which was manifested in His life on earth, surrender yourself to Him by faith that He may enable you to live that life from hour to hour. Believe that the Lord will by His Spirit lead you into, and keep you in this life of holiness and of consecration to God's service. Live thus in the obedience of faith, always attentive to His voice, and the guidance of His Spirit.

From the time that this Fatherly discipline has led the sick one to a life of holiness, God has attained His purpose, and He will heal him who asks it in faith. Our earthly parents "for a few days chastened us... All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous, but grievous: yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness" (Hebrews 12:10,11, RV). Yes, it is when the believer realizes this "peaceable fruit... of righteousness," that he is in a condition to be delivered from the chastisement.

Oh, it is because believers still understand so little that sanctification means an entire consecration to God that they cannot really believe that healing will quickly follow the sanctification of the sick one. Good health is too often for them only a matter of personal comfort and enjoyment which they may dispose of at their will, but God cannot thus minister to their selfishness. If they understood better that God requires of His children that they should be "sanctified and meet for the Master's use," they would not be surprised to see Him giving healing and renewed strength to those who have learned to place all their members at His disposal, willing to be sanctified and employed in His service by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of healing is also the Spirit of sanctification.

CHAPTER XIII.

SICKNESS AND DEATH

"Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence... Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday...

With long life will I satisfy him, and show him My salvation"
(Psalm 91:3, 5-6, 16)

"They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing"
(Psalm 92:14).

This objection is often made to the words of the apostle James, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick" [James 5:15]:

> "If we have the promise of being always healed in answer to prayer, how can it be possible to die?"

And some add:

> "How can a sick person know whether God, who fixes the time of our life, has not decided that we shall die by such a sickness? In such a case, would not prayer be useless, and would it not be a sin to ask for healing?

Before replying, we would remark that this objection touches not such as believe in Jesus as the Healer of the sick, but the Word of God itself, and the promise so clearly declared in the epistle of James and elsewhere. We are not at liberty to change or to limit the promises of God whenever they present some difficulty to us; neither can we insist that they shall be clearly explained to us before we can bring ourselves to believe what they state. It is for us to begin by receiving them without resistance; then only can the Spirit of God find us in the state of mind in which we can be taught and enlightened.

Furthermore, we would remark that in considering a divine truth which has been for a long time neglected in the Church, it can hardly be understood at the outset. It is only little by little that its importance and bearing are discerned. In measure as it revives, after it has been accepted by faith, the Holy Spirit will accompany it with new light. Let us remember that it is by the unbelief of the Church that divine healing has left her. It is not on the answers of such or such a one that faith in Bible truths should be made to depend. "There ariseth light in the darkness" (Psalm 112:4) for the "upright" who are ready to submit themselves to the Word of God.

- 1. To the first objection it is easy to reply. Scripture fixes seventy or eighty years as the ordinary measure of human life.

> Psalm 90
> 10 The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

The believer who receives Jesus as the Healer of the sick will rest satisfied then with the declaration of the Word of God. He will feel at liberty to expect a life of seventy years, but not longer. Besides, the man of faith places himself under the direction of the Spirit, which will enable him to discern the will of God if something should prevent his attaining the age of seventy. Every rule has its exceptions, in the things of heaven as in the things of earth. Of this, therefore, we

are sure according to the Word of God, whether by the words of Jesus or by those of James, that our heavenly Father wills, as a rule, to see His children in good health that they may labor in His service.

For the same reason He wills to set them free from sickness as soon as they have made confession of sin and prayed with faith for their healing. For the believer who has walked with his Savior, strong with the strength which proceeds from divine healing, and whose body is consequently under the influence of the Holy Spirit, it is not necessary that when his time comes to die, he should die of sickness. To fall asleep in Jesus Christ, such is the death of the believer when the end of his life is come. For him death is only sleep after fatigue, the entering into rest. The promise, "That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Ephesians 6: 3), is addressed to us who live under the New Covenant. The more the believer has learned to see in the Savior Him who "took our infirmities" (Matthew 8:17) the more he has the liberty to claim the literal fulfillment of the promises: "With long life will I satisfy him" (Psalm 91:16); "They shall bring forth fruit in old age, they shall be fat and flourishing" (Psalm 92:14).

- 2. The same text applies to the second objection. The sick one sees in God's Word that it is His will to heal His children after the confession of their sins, and in answer to the prayer of faith. It does not follow that they shall be exempt from other trials; but as for sickness, they are healed of it because it attacks the body, which is become the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. The sick one should then desire healing that the power of God may be made manifest in him, and that he may serve Him in accomplishing His will. In this he clings to the revealed will of God, and for that which is not revealed he knows that God will make known His mind to His servants who walk with Him. We would insist here that faith is not a logical reasoning which ought in some way to oblige God to act according to His promises. It is rather the confiding attitude of the child who honors his Father, who counts upon His love to see Him fulfilling His promises, and who knows that He is faithful to communicate to the body as well as to the soul the new strength which flows from the redemption, until the moment of departure is come.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HOLY SPIRIT THE SPIRIT OF HEALING

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit... To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit... But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will"

(I Corinthians 12:4, 9, 11).

What is it that distinguishes the children of God? What is their glory? It is that God dwells in the midst of them and reveals Himself to them in power (Exodus 33:16; 34:9-10).

> Exodus 33
> 16 For wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? is it not in that Thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.
>
> Exodus 34
> 9 And he said, If now I have found grace in Thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray Thee, go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for Thine inheritance.
> 10 And He said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the LORD: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee.

Under the New Covenant this dwelling of God in the believer is still more manifest than in former times. God sends the Holy Spirit to His Church, which is the Body of Christ, to act in her with power, and her life and her prosperity depend on Him. The Spirit must find in her unreserved, full liberty, that she may be recognized as the Church of Christ, the Lord's Body. In every age the Church may look for manifestations of the Spirit, for they form our indissoluble unity; "one body and one Spirit" (Ephesians 4:4).

The Spirit operates variously in such or such a member of the Church. It is possible to be filled with the Spirit for one special work and not for another. There are also times in the history of the Church when certain gifts of the Spirit are given with power, while at the same time ignorance or unbelief may hinder other gifts. Wherever the life more abundant of the Spirit is to be found, we may expect Him to manifest all His gifts.

The gift of healing is one of the most beautiful manifestations of the Spirit. It is recorded of Jesus, "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth... Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil" (Acts 10:38). The Holy Spirit in Him was a healing Spirit, and He was the same in the disciples after Pentecost. Thus the words of our text express what was the continuous experience of the early Church (compare attentively Acts 3:7; 4:30; 5:12,15-16; 6:8; 8:7; 9:41; 14:9-10; 16:18-19; 19:12; 28: 8-9).

> Acts
> 3:7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.
>
> 4:30 By stretching forth Thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the Name of Thy Holy Child Jesus.
>
> 5:12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.
> 5:15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.

5:16 There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

6:8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

8:7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

9:41 And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.

14:9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,
14:10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

16:18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the Name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.
16:19 And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers,

19:12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

28:8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.
28:9 So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:

The abundant pouring out of the Spirit produced abundant healings. What a lesson for the Church in our days!

Divine healing is the work of the Holy Spirit. Christ's redemption extends it's powerful working to the body, and the Holy Spirit is responsible both to transmit it to and maintain it in us. Our body shares in the benefit of the redemption, and even now it can receive the pledge of it by divine healing. It is Jesus who heals, Jesus who anoints and baptizes with the Holy Spirit. Jesus, who baptized His disciples with the same Spirit, is He who sends us the Holy Spirit here on earth either to keep sickness away from us, or to restore us to health when sickness has taken hold upon us.

Divine healing accompanies the sanctification by the Spirit. It is to make us holy that the Holy Spirit makes us partakers of Christ's redemption. Hence His name "Holy." Therefore the healing which He works is an intrinsic part of His divine mission, and He bestows it

either to lead the sick one to be converted and to believe (Acts 4: 29-30; 5:12,14; 6:7-8; 8:6,8; 9:42) or to confirm his faith if he is already converted.

Acts
4:29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto Thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak Thy Word,
4:30 By stretching forth Thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the Name of Thy Holy Child Jesus.

5:12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.
5:14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)

6:7 And the Word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.
6:8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

8:6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.
8:8 And there was great joy in that city.

9:42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.

He constrains him thus to renounce sin, and to consecrate himself entirely to God and to His service (I Corinthians 10:31; James 5:15, 16; Hebrews 12:10).

1 Corinthians 10
31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

James 5
15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.
16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Hebrews 12
10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness.

Divine healing tends to glorify Jesus. It is God's will that His Son should be glorified, and the Holy Spirit does this when He comes to show us what the redemption of Christ does for us. The redemption of the mortal body appears almost more marvelous than that of the immortal soul. In these two ways God wills to dwell in us through Christ, and thus to triumph over the flesh. As soon as our body becomes the temple of God through the Spirit, Jesus is glorified.

Divine healing takes place wherever the Spirit of God works in power. Proofs of this are to

be found in the lives of the Reformers, and in those of certain Moravians in their best times. But there are yet other promises touching the pouring out of the Holy Spirit which have not been fulfilled up to this time. Let us live in a holy expectation, praying the Lord to accomplish them in us.

CHAPTER XV.

PERSEVERING PRAYER

"And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"
(Luke 18:1-8).

The necessity of praying with perseverance is the secret of all spiritual life. What a blessing to be able to ask the Lord for such and such a grace until He gives it, knowing with certainty that it is His will to answer prayer, but what a mystery for us in the call to persevere in prayer, to knock in faith at His door, to remind Him of His promises, and to do so without wearying until He arises and grants us our petition! Is not the assurance that our prayer can obtain from the Lord that which He would not otherwise give the evident proof that man has been created in the image of God, that he is His friend, that he is His fellow worker, and that the believers who together form the Body of Christ participate in this manner in His intercessory work? It is to Christ's intercession that the Father responds, and to which He grants His divine favors.

More than once the Bible explains to us the need for persevering prayer. There are many grounds, the chief of which is the justice of God. God has declared that sin must bear its consequences; sin therefore has rights over a world which welcomes and remains enslaved by it. When the child of God seeks to quit this order of things, it is necessary that the justice of God should consent to this; time therefore is needed that the privileges which Christ has procured for the believers should weigh before God's tribunal. Besides this, the opposition of Satan, who always seeks to prevent the answer to prayer, is a reason for it (Daniel 10:12-13).

Daniel 10
12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words

were heard, and I am come for thy words.
13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.

The only means by which this unseen enemy can be conquered is faith. Standing firmly on the promises of God, faith refuses to yield, and continues to pray and wait for the answer, even when it is delayed, knowing that the victory is sure (Ephesians 6:12-13).

Ephesians 6
12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.
13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Finally, perseverance in prayer is needful for ourselves. Delay in the answer is intended to prove and strengthen our faith; it ought to develop in us the steadfast will which will no longer let go the promises of God, but which renounces its own side of things to trust in God alone. It is then that God, seeing our faith, finds us ready to receive His favor and grants it to us. He will avenge speedily, even though He tarry. Yes, notwithstanding all the needful delays, He will not make us wait a moment too long. If we cry unto Hun day and night, He will avenge us speedily.

This perseverance in prayer will become easy to us as soon as we fully understand what faith is. Jesus teaches us in these words, "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22). When the Word of God authorizes us to ask anything, we ought at once to believe that we receive it.

[Mark 11
24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.]

God gives it to us; this we know by faith, and we can say between God and us that we have received it, although it might be only later that we are permitted to realize the effects here on earth. It is before having seen or experienced anything whatsoever that faith rejoices in having received, perseveres in praying, and waits until the answer is manifest. But even after having believed that we are heard, it is good to persevere until it has become an accomplished fact.

This is of great importance in obtaining divine healing. Sometimes, it is true, the healing is immediate and complete; but it may happen that we have to wait, even when a sick person has been able to ask for it in faith. Sometimes also the first symptoms of healing are immediately manifest; but afterwards the progress is slow, and interrupted by times when it is arrested or when the evil returns. In such cases it is important for both the sick person and those who pray with him to believe in the efficacy of persevering prayer, even though they may not understand the mystery of it. That which God appears at first to refuse, He grants

later to the prayer of the Canaanitish woman, to the prayer of the widow, to that of the friend who knocks at midnight (Matthew 15:22-28; Luke 18:3-8; 11:5-8).

> Matthew 15
> 22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.
> 23 But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.
> 24 But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
> 25 Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me.
> 26 But He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs.
> 27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.
> 28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

> Luke 18
> 3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.
> 4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;
> 5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.
> 6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.
> 7 And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them?
> 8 I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?

> Luke 11
> 5 And He said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;
> 6 For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?
> 7 And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.
> 8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

Without regarding either change or answer, the faith which is grounded on the Word of God, and which continues to pray with importunity, ends by gaining the victory. "Shall not God avenge His own elect which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you He will avenge them speedily" (Luke 18:7-8). God knows how to delay all the time which is necessary, and nevertheless to act speedily without waiting more than is needful. The same two things should belong to our faith. Let us lay hold with a holy promptitude of the grace which is promised us, as if we had already received it; let us await with untiring

patience the answer which is slow to come. Such faith belongs to living in Him. It is in order to produce in us this faith that sickness is sent to us, and that the healing is granted to us, for such faith above all glorifies God.

CHAPTER XVI.

LET HIM THAT IS HEALED GLORIFY GOD

"And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God"
(Luke 18:43).

"And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God"
(Acts 3:8).

It is a prevalent idea that piety is easier in sickness than in health; that silence and suffering incline the soul to seek the Lord and enter into communion with Him better than the distractions of active life; that, in fact, sickness throws us more upon God. For these reasons sick people hesitate to ask for healing from the Lord; for they say to themselves, How can we know whether sickness may not be better for us than health? To think thus is to ignore that the healing and its fruits are divine. Let us. try to understand that though a healing through ordinary means may at times run the risk of making God relax His hand, divine healing, on the contrary, binds us more closely to Him. Thus it comes to pass that in our day, as in the time of the early ministry of Jesus Christ, the believer who has been healed by Him can glorify Him far better than the one who remains sick. Sickness can only glorify God in the measure in which it gives occasion to manifest His power (John 9:3; 11:4).

> John 9
> 3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.
>
> John 11
> 4 When Jesus heard that, He said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

The sufferer who is led by his sufferings to give glory to God, does it, so to speak, by constraint. If he had health and liberty to choose, it is quite possible that his heart would turn back to the world. In such a case the Lord must keep him on one side; his piety depends on his sickly condition. This is why the world supposes that religion is hardly efficacious anywhere but in sick chambers or death beds, and for such as have no need to enter into the noise and stir of ordinary life. In order that the world may be convinced of the power of

religion against temptation, it must see the believer who is in good health walking in calmness and holiness even in the midst of work and of active life. Doubtless very many sick people have glorified God by their patience in suffering, but He can be still more glorified by a health which He has sanctified.

Why then, we are asked, should those who have been healed in answer to the prayer of faith glorify the Lord more than such as have been healed through earthly remedies? Here is the reason. Healing by means of remedies shows us the power of God in nature; but it does not bring us into living and direct contact with Him; while divine healing is an act proceeding from God, without anything but the Holy Spirit.

In this latter, contact with God is the thing which is essential, and it is for this reason that examination of the conscience and the confession of sins should be the preparation for it (I Corinthians 11:30-32; .James 5:15-16).

> 1 Corinthians 11
> 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.
> 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.
> 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.
>
> James 5
> 15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.
> 16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

One who is so healed is called to consecrate himself quite anew and entirely to the Lord (I Corinthians 6:13,19).

> 1 Corinthians 6
> 13 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.
> 19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

All this depends upon the act of faith which lays hold of the Lord's promise, which yields to Him, and which does not doubt that the Lord at once takes possession of what is consecrated to Him. This is why the continuance of health received depends on the holiness of the life, and the obedience in seeking always the good pleasure of the divine Healer (Exodus 15:26).

> Exodus 15
> 26 And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His Commandments, and keep all His Statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee.

Health obtained under such conditions ensures spiritual blessings. The mere restoration to health by ordinary means does not. When the Lord heals the body it is that He may take possession of it and make it a temple that He may dwell in. The joy which then fills the soul is indescribable. It is not only the joy of being healed; it is joy mingled with humility, and a holy enthusiasm which recognizes the touch of the Lord and receives a new life from Him. In the exuberance of his joy the healed one exalts the Lord, he glorifies Him by word and deed, and all his life is consecrated to his God.

It is evident that these fruits of healing are not the same for all, and that sometimes there are steps made backwards. The life of the healed one has a solidarity with the life of believers around him. Their doubts and their inconsistencies may in time tend to make his steps totter, although this generally results in a new beginning. Each day he discovers and recognizes afresh that his life is the Lord's life; he enters into a more intimate and more joyous communion with Him; he learns to live in habitual dependence upon Jesus, and receives from Him that strength which results from a more complete consecration.

Oh, what may not the Church become when she lives in this faith, when every sick person shall recognize in sickness a call to be holy, and to expect from the Lord a manifestation of His presence, when healings shall be multiplied, producing in each a witness of the power of God, all ready to cry with the Psalmist, "Bless the Lord, O my soul... Who healeth all thy diseases" (Psalm 103:2-3).

CHAPTER XVII.

THE NEED FOR A MANIFESTATION OF GOD'S POWER

"And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto Thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak Thy Word, by stretching forth Thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the Name of Thy Holy Child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness"
(Acts 4:29-31).

Is it permissible to pray in this way now, to ask the Lord, "Grant unto thy servants to speak thy Word with all boldness while thou stretchest forth thy hand to heal" (RV)? Let us look into this question.

Does not the Word of God meet with as many difficulties in our days as then, and are not the needs now equally pressing? Let us picture to ourselves the apostles in the midst of Jerusalem and her unbelief; on the one hand the rulers of the people and their threatenings; on the other, the blinded multitude refusing to believe in the Crucified. Now the world is no longer so openly hostile to the Church because it has lost its fear of her, but its flattering

words are more to be dreaded than its hatred. Dissimulation is sometimes worse than violence. And is not a Christianity of mere form, in the sleep of indifference, just as inaccessible as an openly resisting Judaism? God's servants need even in the present day, in order that the Word may be preached with all boldness, that the power of God should be evidently manifested among them.

Is not the help of God as necessary now as then? The apostles knew well that it was not the eloquence of their preaching which caused the truth to triumph, but they knew the necessity for the Holy Spirit to manifest His presence by miracles. It was needful that the living God should stretch forth His hand, that there might be healings, miracles, and signs in the name of His holy Son Jesus. It was only thus that His servants rejoiced, and, strengthened by His presence, could speak His Word with boldness and teach the world to fear His name.

Do not the divine promises concern us also? The apostles counted on these words of the Lord before He ascended, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature... and these signs shall follow them that believe... they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover" (Mark 16:15,17-18). This charge indicates the divine vocation of the Church; the promise which follows it shows us what is her armor, and proves to us that the Lord acts in concert with her. It was because the apostles counted on this promise that they prayed the Lord to grant them this proof of His presence. They had been filled with the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost, but they still needed the supernatural signs which His power works. The same promise is as much for us, for the command to preach the Gospel cannot be severed from the promise of divine healing with which it is accompanied. It is nowhere to be found in the Bible that this promise was not for future times. In all ages God's people greatly need to know that the Lord is with them, and to possess the irrefutable proof of it. Therefore this promise is for us; let us pray for its fulfillment.

Ought we to reckon on the same grace? We read in the Acts when the apostles had prayed, "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness... And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people... and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (Acts 4:31; 5:12,14). Oh, what joy and what new strength would God's people receive today if anew the Lord should thus stretch forth His hand! How many wearied and discouraged laborers grieve that they do not see more results, more blessings on their labors! What life would come into their faith if signs of this kind should arise to prove to them that God is with them! Many who are indifferent would be led to reflect, more than one doubter would regain confidence, and all unbelievers would be reduced to silence. And the poor heathen! How he would awake if he saw by facts that which words had not enabled him to lay hold of, if he were forced to acknowledge that the Christians God is the living God who doeth wonders, the God of love who blesses!

Awake, awake, put on thy strength, Church of Christ! Although thou hast lost by thy unfaithfulness the joy of seeing allied to the preaching of the Word the hand of the Lord stretched out to heal, the Lord is ready to grant thee this grace anew. Acknowledge that it is thine own unbelief which has so long deprived thee of it, and pray for pardon. Clothe thyself with the strength of prayer.

"Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord. Awake as in the ancient days" (Isaiah 51:9).

CHAPTER XVIII.

SIN AND SICKNESS

"The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed"
(James 5:15, 16).

Here, as in other Scriptures, the pardon of sins and the healing of sickness are closely united. James declares that pardon of sins will be granted with the healing; and for this reason he desires to see confession of sin accompany the prayer which claims healing. We know that confession of sin is indispensable to obtain from God the pardon of sin: it is not less so to obtain healing. Unconfessed sin presents an obstacle to the prayer of faith; in any case, the sickness may soon reappear, and for this reason.

The first care of a physician, when he is called to treat a patient, is to diagnose the cause of the disease. If he succeeds he stands a better chance to combat it. Our God also goes back to the primary cause of all sickness that is, sin. It is our part to confess and God's to grant the pardon which removes this first cause, so that healing can take place. In seeking for healing by means of earthly remedies, the first thing to do is to find a clever physician, and then to follow his prescriptions exactly; but **in having recourse to the prayer of faith, it is needful to fix our eyes, above all, upon the Lord, and to ascertain how we stand with Him**. James therefore points out to us a condition which is essential to the recovery of our health; namely, that we confess and forsake sin.

Sickness is a consequence of sin. It is because of sin that God permits it; it is in order to show us our faults, to chasten us, and purify us from them. Sickness is therefore a visible sign of God's judgment upon sin. It is not that the one who is sick is necessarily a greater sinner than another who is in health. On the contrary, it is often the most holy among the children of God whom He chastens, as we see from the example of Job. Neither is it always to check some fault which we can easily determine: it is especially to draw the attention of the sick one to that which remains in him of the egotism of the old man and of all which hinders him from a life entirely consecrated to his God. The first step which the sick one has to take in the path of divine healing will be therefore to let the Holy Spirit of God probe his heart and convince him of sin. After which will come, also, humiliation, decision to break with sin, and confession. To confess our sins is to lay them down before God as in Achans case (Joshua

7:23), to subject them to His judgment, with the fixed purpose to fall into them no more. A sincere confession will be followed by a new assurance of pardon.

> Joshua 7
> 23 And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD.

"If he has committed sins they shall be forgiven him." When we have confessed our sins, we must receive also the promised pardon, believing that God gives it in very deed. Faith in God's pardon is often vague in the child of God. Either he is uncertain, or he returns to old impressions, to the time when he first received pardon; but the pardon which he now receives with confidence, in answer to the prayer of faith, will bring him new life and strength. The soul then rests under the efficacy of the blood of Christ, receives from the Holy Spirit the certainty of the pardon of sin, and that therefore nothing remains to hinder the Savior from filling him with His love and with His grace. God's pardon brings with it a divine life which acts powerfully upon him who receives it.

When the soul has consented to make a sincere confession and has obtained pardon, it is ready to lay hold of the promise of God; it is no longer difficult to believe that the Lord will raise up His sick one. It is when we keep far from God that it is difficult to believe; confession and pardon bring us quite near to Him. As soon as the cause of the sickness has been removed, the sickness itself can be arrested. Now it is easy for the sick one to believe that if the Lord necessarily subjected the body to the chastisement of the sins committed, He also wills that, the sin being pardoned, this same body should receive the grace which manifests His love. His presence is revealed, a ray of life, of His divine life, comes to quicken the body, and the sick one proves that as soon as he is no longer separated from the Lord, the prayer of faith does save the sick.

CHAPTER XIX.

JESUS BORE OUR SICKNESS

"Surely He hath borne our sicknesses and carried our sorrows... My Righteous Servant shall justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities... He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because... He bare the sin of many"
(Isaiah 53:4 RSV, margin, 11, 12).

Do you know this beautiful chapter, the fifty-third of Isaiah, which has been called the fifth Gospel? In the light of the Spirit of God, Isaiah describes beforehand the sufferings of the Lamb of God, as well as the divine graces which would result from them.

The expression "to bear" could not but appear in this prophecy. It is, in fact, the word which

must accompany the mention of sin, whether as committed directly by the sinner, or whether as transmitted to a Substitute. The transgressor, the priest, and the expiatory victim must all bear the sin. In the same way, it is because the Lamb of God has borne our sins that God smote Him for the iniquity of us all. Sin was not found in Him, but it was put upon Him; He took it voluntarily upon Him. And it is because He bore it and that, in bearing it, He put an end to it that He has the power to save us. My Righteous Servant shall justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities... He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because... He bare the sin of many" (Isaiah 53:11,12). It is, therefore, because our sins have been borne by Jesus Christ that we are delivered from them as soon as we believe this truth; consequently we need no longer bear them ourselves.

In this same chapter, the expression "to bear" occurs twice, but in relation to two different things. It is said not only that the Lord's righteous Servant has borne our sins (verse 12), but also that He has borne our sicknesses (verse 4, RV, margin). Thus His bearing our sicknesses forms an integral part of the Redeemers work as well as bearing our sins. Although Himself without sin He has borne our sins, and He has done as much for our sicknesses. The human nature of Jesus could not be touched by sickness because it remained holy. We never find in the account of His life any mention of sickness. Participating in all the weaknesses of our human nature, hunger, thirst, fatigue and sleep, because all these things are not the consequence of sin, He still had no trace of sickness. As He was without sin, sickness had no hold on Him, and He could die only a violent death and that by His voluntary consent. Thus it is not in Him but on Him that we see sickness as well as sin; He took them upon Him and bore them of His own free will. In bearing them and taking them upon Him, He has by this very fact triumphed over them, and has acquired the right of delivering His children from them.

Sin had attacked and ruined equally the soul and the body. Jesus came to save both. Having taken upon Him sickness as well as sin, He is in a position to set us free from the one as well as the other, and that He may accomplish this double deliverance He expects from us only one thing: our faith.

As soon as a sick believer understands the meaning of the words, "Jesus has borne my sins," he does not fear to say also: "I need no longer bear my sins, they are upon me no longer." In the same way as soon as he has fully taken in and believed for himself that Jesus has borne our sicknesses, he does not fear to say: "I need no longer bear my sickness; Jesus in bearing sin bore also sickness which is its consequence; for both He has made propitiation, and He delivers me from both."

I have myself witnessed the blessed influence which this truth exercised one day upon a sick woman. For seven years she had been almost continually bedfast. A sufferer from tuberculosis, epilepsy, and other sicknesses, she had been assured that no hope of cure remained for her. She was carried into the room where the late Mr. W. E. Boardman was holding a Sunday evening service for the sick, and was laid in a half-fainting condition on the sofa. She was too little conscious to remember anything of what took place until she heard the words, "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses" (Matthew 8:17), and then she seemed to hear the words, "If He has borne your sicknesses, why then bear them yourself? Get up."

"But," she thought, "if I attempt to get up, and fall upon the ground, what will they think of

me?"

But the inward voice began again: "If He has borne my sins, why should I have to bear them?" To the astonishment of all who were present, she arose, and, although still feeble, sat down in a chair by the table. From that moment her healing made rapid progress. At the end of a few weeks she had no longer the appearance of an invalid, and later on her strength was such that she could spend many hours a day in visiting the poor. With what joy and love she could then speak of Him who was "the strength of her life" (Psalm 27:1).

> Psalm 27
> 1 The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

She had believed that Jesus had borne her sicknesses as well as her sins, and her faith was not put to confusion. It is thus that Jesus reveals Himself as a perfect Savior to all those who will trust themselves unreservedly to Him.

CHAPTER XX.

IS SICKNESS A CHASTISEMENT?

"For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep. For if we discerned ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world"
(I Corinthians 11:30-32, RV).

In writing to the Corinthians the Apostle Paul must needs reprove them for the manner in which they observed the Lord's Supper, drawing upon themselves the chastisements of God. Here, therefore, we see sickness as a judgment of God, a chastisement for sin. Paul sees it to be a real chastisement since he afterwards says: "chastened of the Lord", and he adds that it is in order to hinder them from falling yet deeper into sin, to prevent them from being condemned with the world, that they are thus afflicted. He warns them that if they would be neither judged nor "chastened of the Lord", that if by such examination they discovered the cause of the sickness and condemned their sins, the Lord would no longer need to exercise severity. Is it not evident that here sickness is a judgment of God, a chastisement of sin, and that we may avoid it in examining and condemning ourselves?

Yes, sickness is, more often than we believe it, a judgment, a chastisement for sin. "God doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men" (Lamentations 3:33). It is not without a cause that He deprives us of health. Perhaps it may be to render us attentive to some sin which we can recognize: "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee" (John 5:14); perhaps because God's child has become entangled in pride and worldliness; or it may be that

self-confidence or caprice have been mixed with his service for God. It is again quite possible that the chastisement may not be directed against any particular sin, but that it may be the result of the preponderance of sin which weighs upon the entire human race. When, in the case of the man born blind, the disciples asked the Lord, "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" and He answered, "Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents" (John 9:3), He does not by any means say that there is no relation between sin and sickness, but **He teaches us not to accuse every sick person of sin**. [See above]

In any case, sickness is always a discipline which ought to awaken our attention to sin, and turn us from it. Therefore a sick person should begin by condemning, or discerning himself (I Corinthians 11:31), by placing himself before his heavenly Father with a sincere desire to see anything which could have grieved Him, or could have rendered the chastisement necessary.

> 1 Corinthians 11
> 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

So doing he may count assuredly on the Holy Spirits light, who will clearly show him his failure. Let him be ready at once to renounce what he may discern, and to place himself at the Lord's disposal to serve Him with perfect obedience, but let him not imagine that he can conquer sin by his own efforts. No, that is impossible to him. But let him, with all his power of will, be on God's side in renouncing what is sin in His sight, and let him believe that he is accepted of Him. So doing he will be yielding himself, consecrating himself anew to God, willing to do only His holy will in all things.

Scripture assures us that if we thus examine ourselves the Lord will not judge us. Our Father only chastens His child as far as needful. God seeks to deliver us from sin and self; as soon as we understand Him and break with these, sickness may cease; it has done its work. We must come to see what the sickness means, and recognize in it the discipline of God. One may recognize vaguely that he commits sins while scarcely attempting to define what they are; or if he does, he may not believe it is possible to give them up; and if he decides to renounce them, he may fail to count on God that He will put an end to the chastisement. And yet, how glorious is the assurance which Paul's words here give us!

Dear sick one, dost thou understand that thy heavenly Father has [or, might have] something to reprove in thee? He would have thy sickness help thee to discover it, and the Holy Spirit will guide thee in the search. Then renounce at once what He may point out to thee. Thou wouldst not have the smallest shade remain between thy Father and thee. It is His will to pardon thy sin and to heal thy sickness. In Jesus we have both pardon and healing; they are two sides of His redemptive work. He calls thee to live a life of dependence upon Him in a greater degree than hitherto. Abandon thyself then to Him in a complete obedience, and walk henceforth as a little child in following His steps. It is with joy that thy heavenly Father will deliver thee from chastisement, that He will reveal Himself to thee as thy Healer, that He will bring thee nearer to Him by this new tie of His love, that He will make thee obedient and faithful in serving Him. If, as a wise and faithful Father, He has been obliged to chasten thee, it is also as a Father that He wills thy healing, and that He desires to bless and keep thee henceforth.

CHAPTER XXI.

GOD'S PRESCRIPTION FOR THE SICK

"Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him"
(James 5:14-15).

This text, above all others, is that which most clearly declares to the sick what they have to do in order to be healed. Sickness and its consequences abound in the world. What joy, then, for the believer to learn from the Word of God the way of healing for the sick! The Bible teaches us that it is the will of God to see His children in good health. The Apostle James has no hesitation in saying that "the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." May the Lord teach us to hearken and to receive with simplicity what His Word tells us!

Notice, first, that James here makes a distinction between affliction (or suffering) and sickness. He says (verse 13): "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray." He does not specify what shall be requested in such a case; still less does he say that deliverance from suffering shall be asked. No; suffering which may arise from various exterior causes is the portion of every Christian. Let us therefore understand that the object of James is to lead the tried believer to ask for deliverance only with a spirit of submission to the will of God, and, above all, to ask the patience which he considers to be the privilege of the believer (James 1: 2-4,12; 5:7-8).

> James 1
> 2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;
> 3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.
> 4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.
> 12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.
>
> James 5
> 7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.
> 8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

But in dealing with the words, "Is any sick among you?" James replies in quite another manner. Now he says with assurance that the sick one may ask for healing with confidence that he shall obtain it, and the Lord will hear him. There is therefore a great difference between suffering and sickness. The Lord Jesus spoke of suffering as being necessary, as being willed and blessed of God; while He says of sickness that it ought to be cured. All other suffering comes to us from without, and will only cease when Jesus shall triumph over the sin and evil which are in the world; while sickness is an evil in the body itself, in this body saved by Christ that it may become the temple of the Holy Spirit, and which, consequently, ought to be healed as soon as the sick believer receives by faith the working of the Holy Spirit, the very life of Jesus in him.

> [**WStS Note:** We see little difference between sickness and suffering. While all suffering is not sickness, all sickness is suffering. God's -- http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Promises.Deliverance.html -- are manifold, and wide enough in scope to deliver from any circumstance within His Will (e.g., 'And **whatsoever** ye shall ask in My Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son' (John 14:13); 'For the LORD God is a Sun and Shield: the LORD will give Grace and Glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly' (Psalm 84:11); 'The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing' (Psalm 34:10). Sickness and suffering, in and of themselves, are neither **morally** good or evil. Though sickness and suffering **may** be caused by sin (and most often are); on the other hand, sickness and suffering are SOLELY instruments in the Hand of God to promote holiness in the Godly. It is possible to be Godly and sick, because Scripture says, "**IF** he have committed sins"-- demonstrating that not all sick people need to repent of sin. "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the LORD shall raise him up; and **IF** he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (James 5:15).]

What is the direction here given to the sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let the elders pray for him. In the time of James there were physicians, but it is not to them the sick believer must turn. The elders then were the pastors and leaders of the churches, called to the ministry not because they had passed through schools of theology, but because they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and well known for their piety and for their faith. Why should their presence be needed by the sick one? Could not his friends have prayed? Yes; but it is not so easy for everybody to exercise the faith which obtains healing, and, doubtless, that is one reason why James desired that men should be called whose faith was firm and sure. Besides this, they were representatives to the sick one of the Church, the collective body of Christ, for it is the communion of believers which invites the Spirit to act with power. In short, they should, after the pattern of the great Shepherd of the sheep, care for the flock as He does, identify themselves with the sick one, understand his trouble, receive from God the necessary discernment to instruct him and encourage him to persevere in faith. It is, then, to the elders of the Church that the healing of the sick is committed, and it is they, the servants of the God who pardons iniquities and heals diseases (Psalm 103), who are called to transmit to others the Lord's graces for soul and body.

> Psalm 103
> 3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; Who healeth all thy diseases;

Finally, there is a promise still more direct that of healing; the apostle speaks of it as the certain consequence of the prayer of faith. "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." **This promise ought to stimulate in every believer the desire and expectation of healing.** Receiving these words with simplicity and as they are written, ought we not to see in them an unlimited promise, offering healing to whomsoever shall pray in faith? The Lord teach us to study His Word with the faith of a truly believing heart!

CHAPTER XXII.

THE LORD THAT HEALETH THEE

"I will put none of these diseases upon thee which I have brought upon the Egyptians, for I am the Lord that healeth thee"
(Exodus 15:26).

How often have we read these Words, without daring to take them for ourselves, and without expectation that the Lord would fulfill them to us! We have seen in them that the people of God ought to be exempt from the diseases inflicted upon the Egyptians, and we have believed that this promise applied only to the Old Testament, and that we who live under the economy of the New Testament cannot expect to be kept from or healed of sickness by the direct intervention of the Lord! As, however, we were obliged to recognize the superiority of the New Covenant, we have come, in our ignorance, to allege that sickness often brings great blessings, and that consequently God had done well to withdraw what He had formerly promised, and to be no longer for us what He was for Israel, "The Lord that healeth thee."

But in our day we see the Church awakening and acknowledging her mistake. She sees that it is under the New Covenant that the Lord Jesus passed on His power of healing to His disciples. She is beginning to see that in charging His Church to preach "the Gospel to every creature" [Mark 16:15], He has promised to be with her "always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20), and as the proof of His presence, His disciples should have the power to lay hands on the sick, and they should be healed (Mark 16:15-18).

> Mark 16
> 15 And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.
> 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.
> 17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My Name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;
> 18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

She sees, moreover, that in the days following Pentecost, the miraculous pouring out of the Holy Spirit was accompanied by miraculous healings, which were evident proof of the blessings brought about by the power from on high (Acts 3:16; 5:12; 9:40).

> Acts
> 3:16 And His Name through faith in His Name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.
>
> 5:12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.
>
> 9:40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

There is nothing in the Bible to make her believe that the promise made to Israel has been since retracted, and she hears from the mouth of the Apostle James this new promise: "The prayer of faith shall save [(or heal)] the sick" (James 5:15). She knows that at all times it has been unbelief which has limited (or set bounds to) the Holy One of Israel (Psalm 78:41),

> Psalm 78
> 41 Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.

and she asks herself if it is not unbelief which hinders in these days this manifestation of the power of God. Who can doubt it? It is not God or His Word which are to blame here; it is our unbelief which prevents the miraculous power of the Lord, and which holds Him back from healing as in past times. Let our faith awake, let it recognize and adore in Christ the all-power of Him who says, "I am the Lord that healeth thee." It is by the works of God that we can best understand what His Word tells us; the healings which again are responding to the prayer of faith confirm, by gloriously illustrating, the truth of His promise.

Let us learn to see in the risen Jesus the divine Healer, and let us receive Him as such. In order that I may recognize in Jesus my justification, my strength, and my wisdom, I must grasp by faith that He is really all this to me; and equally when the Bible tells me that Jesus is the sovereign Healer, I must myself appropriate this truth, and say, "Yes, Lord, it is Thou who art my Healer." And why may I hold Him as such? It is because He gives Himself to me, that I am "one plant with Him" (Romans 6:5, French ver.),

> Romans 6
> 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection:

and that, inseparably united to Him, I thus possess His healing power; it is because His love is pleased to load His beloved with His favors, to communicate Himself with all His heart to all who desire to receive Him. Let us believe that He is ready to extend the treasure of blessing, contained in the name, "The Lord that healeth thee," to all who know and who can trust in this divine name. This is the treatment for the sick indicated by the law of His kingdom. When I bring my sickness to the Lord, I do not depend on what I see, on what I feel

or what I think, but on what He says. Even when everything appears contrary to the expected healing, even if it should not take place at the time or in the way that I had thought I should receive it, even when the symptoms seem only to be aggravated, **my faith, strengthened by the very waiting**, should cling immovably to this Word which has gone out of the mouth of God, "I am the Lord that healeth thee."

> [Isaiah 40
> 31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.]

God is ever seeking to make us true believers. **Healing and health are of little value if they do not glorify God, and serve to unite us more closely with Him**; thus in the matter of healing our faith must always be put to the proof. He who counts on the name of his God, who can hear Jesus saying to him, "Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldest believe thou shouldest see the glory of God?" (John 11:40), will have the joy of receiving from God Himself the healing of the body, and of seeing it take place in a manner worthy of God, and conformably to His promises. When we read these Words, "I am the Lord that healeth thee," let us not fear to answer eagerly, "Yes, Lord, Thou art 'the Lord that healeth' me."

CHAPTER XXIII.

JESUS HEALS THE SICK

"He healed all that were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying: Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses"
(Matthew 8:16-17).

In a preceding chapter we have studied the words of the prophet Isaiah. If the reader has still any doubt as to the interpretation of it which has been given, we remind him of that which the Holy Spirit caused the evangelist St. Matthew to write about it. It is expressly said regarding all the sick ones whom Jesus healed, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet." It was because Jesus had taken on Him our sicknesses that He could, that He ought to heal them. If He had not done so, one part of His work of redemption would have remained powerless and fruitless.

This text of the Word of God is not generally understood in this way. It is the generally accepted view that the miraculous healings done by the Lord Jesus are to be looked upon only as the proof of His mercy, or as being the symbol of spiritual graces. They are not seen to be a necessary consequence of redemption, although that is what the Bible declares. The body and the soul have been created to serve together as a habitation of God; the sickly condition of the body is [in general], as well as that of the soul, a consequence of sin, and that

is what Jesus came to bear, to expiate and to conquer.

When the Lord Jesus was on earth, it was not in the character of the Son of God that He cured the sick, but as the Mediator who had taken upon Him and borne sickness, and this enables us to understand why Jesus gave so much time to His healing work, and why also the evangelists speak of it in a manner so detailed. Read for example what Matthew says about it:

> Matthew
> 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing **all** manner of sickness and **all** manner of disease among the people.
> 4:24 And His fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto Him **all** sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and He healed them.
>
> Matthew
> 9:35 And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing **every** sickness and **every** disease among the people.
>
> Matthew
> 10:1 And when He had called unto Him His twelve disciples, He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal **all** manner of sickness and **all** manner of disease.

When the disciples of John the Baptist came to ask Jesus if He were the Messiah, that He might prove it to them, He replied, "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them" (11:5). After the cure of the withered hand, and the opposition of the Pharisees who sought to destroy Him, we read that "great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them **all**" (12:15). When later, the multitude had followed Him into a desert place, it is said, "And Jesus went forth and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and He healed their sick" (14:14). Farther on: "They sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto Him **all** that were diseased; and besought Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment; and as many as touched were made perfectly whole" (14:35-36). It is said also of the sick which were among the multitudes that they "cast them down at Jesus feet and He healed them," and Matthew adds: "insomuch that the multitude wondered when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see; and they glorified the God of Israel" (15:30-31). And finally, when He came into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan, "Great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them there" (19:2).

Let us add to these many texts those which give us in detail the account of healings wrought by Jesus, and let us ask ourselves if these healings afford us only the proof of His power during His life here on earth, or if they are not much rather the undoubted and continual result of His work of mercy and of love, the manifestation of His power of redemption which delivers the soul and body from the dominion of sin? Yes; that was in very deed the purpose

of God. If, then, Jesus bore our sicknesses as an integral part of the redemption, if He has healed the sick "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias," and if His Savior-heart is always full of mercy and of love, we can believe with certainty that to this very day it is the will of Jesus to heal the sick in answer to the prayer of faith.

CHAPTER XXIV.

FERVENT AND EFFECTUAL PRAYER

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit"
(James 5:16-18).

James knew that a faith which obtains healing is not the fruit of human nature; therefore he adds that the prayer must be "fervent." Only such can be efficacious. In this he stands upon the example of Elijah, a man of the same nature ("subject to like passions") as we are, drawing therefore the inference that our prayer can be and ought to be of the same nature as his. How then did Elijah pray? This will throw some light upon what the prayer of faith should be.

Elijah had received from God the promise that rain was about to fall upon the earth (I Kings 18:1), and he had declared this to Ahab. Strong in the promise of his God, he mounts Carmel to pray (I Kings 18:42; James 5:18).

> 1 Kings 18
> 1 And it came to pass after many days, that the Word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, show thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.
> 42 So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees,
>
> James 5
> 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

He knows, he believes that God's will is to send rain, and nevertheless he must pray, or the rain will not come. His prayer is no empty form; it is a real power, the efficacy of which is about to make itself felt in heaven. God wills that it shall rain, but the rain will only come at Elijah's request, a request repeated with faith and perseverance until the appearance of the

first cloud in the sky. In order that the will of God shall be accomplished, this will must on one side be expressed by a promise, and on the other it must be received and laid hold of by the believer who prays. **He therefore must persevere in prayer that he may show his God that his faith expects an answer, and will not grow weary until it is obtained**.

This is how prayer must be made for the sick. The promise of God, "The Lord will raise him up," [James 5:15] must be rested on, and His will to heal recognized. Jesus Himself teaches us to pray with faith which counts on the answer of God; He says to us: "All things whatsoever ye pray for, and ask for, believe that ye have received them and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24, RV). **After the prayer of faith which receives beforehand that which God has promised, comes the prayer of perseverance**, which does not lose sight of that which has been asked until God has fulfilled His promise (I Kings 18:43).

> 1 Kings 18
> 43 And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times.

There may be some obstacle which hinders the fulfillment of the promise; whether on the side of God and His righteousness (Deuteronomy 9:18),

> Deuteronomy 9
> 18 And I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger.

or on the side of Satan, and his constant opposition to the plans of God, something which may still impede the answer to the prayer (Daniel 10:12,13).

> Daniel 10
> 12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.
> 13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.

It may be also that our faith needs to be purified (Matthew 15:22-28).

> Matthew 15
> 22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.
> 23 But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.
> 24 But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
> 25 Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me.
> 26 But He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs.

27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.
28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

Whatever it may be, our faith is called to persevere until the answer comes. He who prays six times fervently and stops there, when he ought to have prayed seven times (II Kings 13:18-19), deprives himself of the answer to his prayer.

2 Kings 13
18 And he said, Take the arrows. And he took them. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed.
19 And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice.

Perseverance in prayer, a perseverance which strengthens the faith of the believer against all which may seem opposed to the answer, is a real miracle; it is one of the impenetrable mysteries of the life of faith. Does it not say to us that the Saviors redeemed one is in very deed His friend, a member of His body, and that the government of the world and the gifts of divine grace depend in some sense upon his prayers? Prayer, therefore, is no vain form. It is the work of the Holy Spirit, who intercedes here on earth in us and by us, and as such, it is as efficacious, as indispensable as the work of the Son interceding for us before the throne of God. It might seem strange that after having prayed with the certainty of being heard, and having seen therein the will of God, we should still need to continue in prayer. Nevertheless it is so. In Gethsemane, Jesus prayed three times in succession. On Carmel Elijah prayed seven times; and we, if we believe the promise of God without doubting, shall pray until we receive the answer. Both the importunate friend at midnight and the widow who besieged the unjust judge are examples of perseverance in seeking the end in view.

Let us learn from Elijah's prayer to humble ourselves, to recognize why the power of God cannot be more manifested in the Church, whether in the healing of the sick, or in conversion, or sanctification. "Ye have not because ye ask not" (James 4:2). Let it also teach us patience. In the cases where healing is delayed, let us remember that obstacles may exist over which only perseverance in prayer can triumph. Faith which ceases to pray, or which is allowed to relax in its fervor, cannot appropriate that which God has nevertheless given. Let not our faith in the promises of Scripture be shaken by those things which are as yet beyond our reach. God's promise remains the same: "The prayer of faith shall save the sick" [James 5:15]. May the prayer of Elijah strengthen our faith. Let us remember that we have to imitate them "who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Hebrews 6:12). If we learn to persevere in prayer, its fruit will be always more abundant, always more evident, and we shall obtain, as Jesus obtained when He was on earth, healing of the sick, often immediate healing, which shall bring glory to God.

CHAPTER XXV.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

"Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working"
(James 5:16, ASV).

James begins by speaking to us of the prayers of the elders of the church; but here he addresses all believers in saying: "Pray one for another that ye may be healed." Having already spoken of confession and pardon, he still adds: "Confess... your sins one for another."

This shows us that the prayer of faith which asks for healing is not the prayer of one isolated believer, but that it ought to unite the members of the body of Christ in the communion of the Spirit. God certainly hears the prayer of each one of His children as soon as it is presented to Him with living faith, but the sick one does not always possess such faith as this. Therefore, that the Holy Spirit may come to act with power, there must generally be the union of several members of the body of Christ unitedly claiming His presence.

This dependence on our brethren should be exercised in two ways. First of all we must confess our faults to any whom we may have wronged, and receive pardon from them. But besides this, if one who is sick has been brought to see in such or such a sin which he has committed the cause of his sickness, and to recognize in it a chastening of God, he ought in such a case to acknowledge his sin before the elders or brethren in Christ who pray for him, and who are thus enabled to do so with more light and more faith. Such confession will be also a touchstone which tests the sincerity of his repentance, for it is easier to confess our sins to God than to man. Before he will do it, his humiliation must needs be real and his repentance sincere. The result will be a closer communion between the sick one and those who intercede for him, and their faith will be quickened anew.

"Pray one for another that ye may be healed." Does not this clearly answer that which one so often hears said: What is the use in going to M. Zeller in Switzerland, Dr. Cullis in America, or to Bethshan in London? Does not the Lord hear prayer in whatsoever place it is offered? Yes; without any doubt wherever a prayer in living faith rises up to God, it finds Him ready to grant healing; but the Church has so neglected to believe in this truth that it is a rare thing in the present day to find Christians capable of praying in this manner. Thus we cannot be too grateful to the Lord that He has inspired certain believers with the desire to consecrate their lives, in part, to witness to the truth of divine healing. Their words and their faith awaken faith in the heart of many sick ones who, without their help, would never arrive at it. It is precisely these very people who always say to everybody, "The Lord is everywhere to be found." Let Christians learn not to neglect the least part of the marvelous power of their God, and He will be able to manifest to all that He is always "the Lord that healeth thee" (Exodus 15:26). Let us take heed to obey the Word of God, to confess one to another, and to pray one for another that we may be healed.

James notes here still another essential condition to successful prayer: it must be the prayer of the righteous. "The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working." The

Scripture tells us that "he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He [(Jesus)] is righteous" (I John 3: 7). James himself was surnamed "The Just," on account of his piety and the tenderness of his conscience. Whether an "elder" or a simple believer, it is only after one is wholly surrendered to God and living in obedience to His will that one can pray effectually for the brethren. John says as much: "Whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His Commandments, and do the things which are pleasing in His sight" (I John 3:22). It is therefore the prayer of one who lives in intimate communion with God which "availeth much." It is to such prayer that God will grant the answer, which He would not be able to give to such other of His children.

We often hear these words quoted: "The prayer of a righteous man availeth much," but very rarely is it taken in connection with its context, or remembered that it is most especially divine healing which is in question here. Oh, may the Lord raise up in His Church many of these righteous men, animated with living faith, whom He can use to glorify Jesus as the divine Healer of the sick!

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE WILL OF GOD

"Thy will be done"
(Matthew 6:10).

"If the Lord will"
(James 4:15).

In days of sickness, when doctors and medicines fail, recourse is generally had to the Words we have here quoted, and they may easily become a stumbling-block in the way of divine healing. How may I know, it is asked, whether it is not God's will that I should remain ill? And as long as this is an open question, how can I believe for healing, how can I pray for it with faith? Here truth and error seem to touch. It is indeed impossible to pray with faith when we are not sure that we are asking according to the will of God. "I can," one may say, "pray fervently in asking God to do the best for me, believing that He will cure me if it is possible." As long as one prays thus, one is indeed praying with submission, but this is not **the prayer of faith**. That **is only possible when we are certain that we are asking according to the will of God**. The question then resolves itself into making sure of what is the will of God. It is a great mistake to think that the child of God cannot know what is His will about healing.

In order to know His divine will, we must be guided by the Word of God. It is His Word which promises us healing. The promise of James 5 is so absolute that it is impossible to deny it. This promise only confirms other passages, equally strong, which tell us that Jesus Christ has obtained for us the healing of our diseases, because He has borne our sicknesses.

According to this promise, we have right to healing, because it is a part of the salvation which we have in Christ, and therefore we may expect it with certainty. Scripture tells us that sickness is, in God's hands, the means of chastening His children for their sins, but that this discipline ceases to be exercised as soon as His suffering child acknowledges and turns from the sin. Is it not as much as to say clearly that God desires only to make use of sickness to bring back His children when they are straying? [See above]

Sick Christian, open thy Bible, study it and see in its pages that sickness is a warning to renounce sin, but that whoever acknowledges and forsakes his sins finds in Jesus pardon and healing. Such is God's promise in His Word. **If the Lord had in view some other dispensation for such of His children whom He was about to call home to Him, He would make known to them His will, giving them by the Holy Spirit a desire to depart; in other special cases, He would awaken some special conviction**;

> [1 Corinthians 15
> 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.]

but as a general rule, the Word of God promises us healing in answer to the prayer of faith.

"Nevertheless," some might say, "is it not better in all things to leave it to the will of God?" And they quote the instance of such and such Christians who would have, so to speak, forced the hand of God by their praying without adding, "Thy will be done," [Matthew 6:10] and who would not have experienced blessing in the answer to their prayers. And these would say, "How do we know whether sickness would not be better for us than health?" Notice here that this is no case of forcing the hand of God, since it is His Word which tells us that it is His will to heal us. "The prayer **of faith** shall save the sick" [James 5:15]. God wills that the health of the soul should have a blessed reflex influence on the health of the body, that the presence of Jesus in the soul should have its confirmation in the good condition of the body. And when you know that such is His will you cannot, when speaking in such a way, say truthfully that you are in all things leaving it to Him. It is not leaving it to Him when you make use of all possible remedies to get healing, instead of laying hold of His promise. Your submission is nothing else than spiritual sloth in view of that which God commands you to do.

As to knowing whether sickness is not better than health, we do not hesitate to reply that the return to health which is the fruit of giving up sin, of consecration to God, and of an ultimate communion with God, is infinitely better than sickness. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification" (I Thessalonians 4:3), and it is by healing that God confirms the reality of this. When Jesus comes to take possession of our body, and cures it miraculously, when it follows that the health received must be maintained from day to day by an uninterrupted communion with Him, the experience which we thus gain of the Saviors power and of His love is a result very superior to any which sickness has to offer. Doubtless sickness may teach us submission, but healing received direct from God makes us better acquainted with our Lord, and teaches us to confide in Him better. Besides which it prepares the believer to accomplish better the service of God.

Christian, who art sick, if thou wilt really seek to know what is the will of God in this thing, do not let thyself be influenced by the opinions of others, nor by thy own former prejudices, but listen to and study what the Word of God has to say. Examine whether it does not tell

thee that divine healing is a part of the redemption of Jesus, and that God wills that every believer should have the right to claim it; see whether it does not promise that the prayer of every child of God for this thing shall be heard, and whether health restored by the power of the Holy Spirit does not manifest the glory of God in the eyes of the Church and of the world. Inquire of it; it will answer thee, that, according to the will of God, sickness is a discipline [most often] occasioned by sin (or shortcoming), and that healing, granted to the prayer of faith, bears witness to His grace which pardons, which sanctifies, and which takes away sin.

CHAPTER XXVII.

OBEDIENCE AND HEALTH

"There made he for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them, and said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His Commandments, and keep all His Statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord that healeth thee"
(Exodus 15:25-26).

It was at Marah that the Lord gave to His people this ordinance. Israel was just released from the yoke of Egypt when their faith was put to the proof in the desert by the waters of Marah. It was after He had sweetened the bitter waters that the Lord promised He would not put upon the children of Israel any of the diseases which He had brought upon the Egyptians so long as they would obey Him. They would be exposed to other trials, they might sometimes suffer the need of bread and of water, and encounter great dangers; all these things might come upon them in spite of their obedience, but sickness might not touch them. In a world still under the power of Satan, they might be a butt for attacks coming from without, but their bodies would not be oppressed with sickness, for God had delivered them from it. Had He not said, "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God... I will put none of these diseases upon thee which I have brought upon the Egyptians, for I am the Lord that healeth thee?" Again elsewhere, "Ye shall serve the Lord your God... and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee" (Exodus 23:25; read also Leviticus 26:14-16; Deuteronomy 7:12-16; 28:15-61).

> Leviticus 26
> 14 But if ye will not hearken unto Me, and will not do all these Commandments;
> 15 And if ye shall despise My Statutes, or if your soul abhor My Judgments, so that ye will not do all My Commandments, but that ye break My Covenant:
> 16 I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.

Deuteronomy 7
12 Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these Judgments, and keep,
and do them, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the Covenant and the
mercy which He sware unto thy fathers:
13 And He will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: He will also bless the
fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil,
the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which He sware
unto thy fathers to give thee.
14 Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female
barren among you, or among your cattle.
15 And the LORD will take away from thee **all** sickness, and will put **none** of the
evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all
them that hate thee.
16 And thou shalt consume all the people which the LORD thy God shall deliver
thee; thine eye shall have no pity upon them: neither shalt thou serve their gods;
for that will be a snare unto thee.

Deuteronomy 28
15 But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD
thy God, to observe to do all His Commandments and His Statutes which I
command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake
thee:
16 Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field.
17 Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store.
18 Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of
thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.
19 Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou
goest out.
20 The LORD shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou
settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish
quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken
Me.
21 The LORD shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until He have
consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it.
22 The LORD shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an
inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with
blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish.
23 And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under
thee shall be iron.
24 The LORD shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall
it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed.
25 The LORD shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go
out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be
removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.
26 And thy carcase shall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of
the earth, and no man shall fray them away.
27 The LORD will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and
with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed.
28 The LORD shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of

heart:
29 And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou
shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled
evermore, and no man shall save thee.
30 Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her: thou shalt build
an house, and thou shalt not dwell therein: thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt
not gather the grapes thereof.
31 Thine ox shall be slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof: thine
ass shall be violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored
to thee: thy sheep shall be given unto thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to
rescue them.
32 Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people, and thine eyes
shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day long: and there shall be no
might in thine hand.
33 The fruit of thy land, and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not
eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway:
34 So that thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.
35 The LORD shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore botch that
cannot be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head.
36 The LORD shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a
nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve
other gods, wood and stone.
37 And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all
nations whither the LORD shall lead thee.
38 Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather but little in; for
the locust shall consume it.
39 Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress them, but shalt neither drink of the wine,
nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them.
40 Thou shalt have olive trees throughout all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint
thyself with the oil; for thine olive shall cast his fruit.
41 Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them; for they
shall go into captivity.
42 All thy trees and fruit of thy land shall the locust consume.
43 The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou
shalt come down very low.
44 He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and
thou shalt be the tail.
45 Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and
overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice
of the LORD thy God, to keep His Commandments and His Statutes which He
commanded thee:
46 And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for
ever.
47 Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with
gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things;
48 Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against
thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and He
shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until He have destroyed thee.
49 The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth,

as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand;
50 A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old,
nor show favour to the young:
51 And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be
destroyed: which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase
of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee.
52 And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come
down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in
all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the LORD thy God hath given thee.
53 And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy
daughters, which the LORD thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the
straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee:
54 So that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be
evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the
remnant of his children which he shall leave:
55 So that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he
shall eat: because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness,
wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates.
56 The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set
the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall
be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her
daughter,
57 And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward
her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all things
secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in
thy gates.
58 If thou wilt not observe to do all the Words of this Law that are written in this
Book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and Fearful Name, THE LORD THY
GOD;
59 Then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed,
even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long
continuance.
60 Moreover He will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast
afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee.
61 Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the Book of this
Law, them will the LORD bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

This calls our attention to a truth of the greatest importance: the intimate relations which exist between obedience and health, between sanctification which is the health of the soul, and the divine healing which ensures the health of the body both are comprised in the salvation that comes from God. **It is noteworthy that in several languages these three words, salvation, healing, and sanctification, are derived from the same root and present the same fundamental thought**. (For instance, the German Heil, salvation; Heilung, healing; Heilichung, sanctification.)

Salvation is the redemption which the Savior has obtained for us,

health is the salvation of the body which also comes to us from the Divine Healer, and lastly,

sanctification reminds us that true salvation and true health consist in being holy as God is holy.

Thus it is in giving health to the body and sanctification to the soul that Jesus is really the Savior of His people. Our text clearly declares the relation which exists between holiness of life and the healing of the body. The expressions which bear this out seem to be purposely multiplied: "If thou wilt diligently hearken... if thou wilt do that which is right... if thou wilt give ear... if thou wilt keep all His Statutes," I will not send any sickness upon thee.

Here we have the key to all true obedience and holiness. We often think we know well the will of God revealed in His Word; but why does not this knowledge bring forth obedience? It is because in order to obey we must begin by hearkening. "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God... and give ear..." As long as the will of God reaches me through the voice of man, or through the reading of a book, it may have but little power with me, while if I enter into direct communion with God, and listen to His voice, His commandment is quickened with living power to facilitate its accomplishment. Christ is the living Word and the Holy Spirit is His voice. Listening to His voice means to renounce all our own will and wisdom, to close the ear to every other voice so as to expect no other direction but that of the Holy Spirit. One who is redeemed is like a servant or child, who needs to be directed; he knows that he belongs entirely to God, and that all his being, spirit, soul and body, ought to glorify God.

But he is equally conscious that this is above his strength, and that he needs to receive, hour by hour, the direction which he needs. He knows also that the divine commandment, as long as it is a dead letter to him, cannot impart to him strength and wisdom, and that it is only as he attentively gives ear that he will obtain the desired strength; therefore, he listens and learns thus to observe the laws of God. This life of attention and action, of renouncement and of crucifixion, constitutes a holy life. The Lord brings us to it in the first place by sickness, and makes us understand that which we are lacking, and then also by the healing which calls the soul to this life of continual attention to the voice of God.

Most Christians see nothing more in divine healing than a temporal blessing for the body, while in the promise of our holy God, **its end is to make us holy**. The call to holiness sounds daily stronger and more clearly in the Church. More and more believers are coming to understand that God wants them to be like Christ; and the Lord is beginning again to make use of His healing virtue, seeking thereby to show us that still in our own days the Holy One of Israel is "the Lord that healeth thee," and that it is His will to keep His people both in health of body and in obedience.

Let him who looks for healing from the Lord receive it with joy. It is not a legal obedience which is required of him, an obedience depending upon his own strength. No; God asks of him, on the contrary, the abandonment of a little child, the attention which hearkens and consents to be led. This is what God expects of him; and the healing of the body will be the result of this childlike faith, for the Lord will reveal Himself to him as the mighty Savior who heals the body and sanctifies the soul.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

JOB'S SICKNESS AND HEALING

"So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown"
(Job 2:7).

The veil which hides from us the unseen world is lifted for a moment in the mysterious history of Job; it reveals to us heaven and hell busily occupied with God's servants upon earth. We see in it the temptations peculiar to sickness, and how Satan makes use of them to dispute with God, and to seek the perdition of the soul of man, while God, on the contrary, seeks to sanctify it by the very same trial. In the case of Job, we see in God's light the source from which sickness proceeds, what is the result which it should have, and how it is possible to be delivered from it.

Whence comes sickness; from God or from Satan? Opinions on this point vastly differ. Some hold that it is sent of God, others see in it the work of the wicked one. Both are in error as long as they hold their view to the exclusion of that held by the other party, while both are in the right if they admit that there are two sides to this question. Let us say then that sickness comes from Satan, but that it cannot exist without the permission of God. On the one hand the power of Satan is that of an oppressor who has not himself any right to pounce upon man and attack him, and on the other hand the claims of Satan on man are legitimate in that the righteousness of God decrees that he who yields himself to Satan places himself under his domination.

Satan is the prince of the kingdom of darkness and of sin; sickness is the consequence of sin. Herein is constituted the right of Satan over the body of sinful man. He is the prince of this world, so recognized by God, until such time as he shall be legally conquered and dethroned. Consequently he has a certain power over all those who remain down here under his jurisdiction. He then it is who torments men with sickness, and seeks thereby to turn them from God, and to work their ruin.

But, we would hasten to say, the power of Satan is far from being almighty; he can do nothing without God's authorization. God permits him to do all he does in tempting men, even believers, but it is in order that the trial may bring forth in them the fruit of holiness. It is also said that Satan has the power of death (Hebrews 2:14),

> Hebrews 2
> 14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil;

that he is everywhere at work where death reigns, and nevertheless he has no power to decide as to the death of God's servants without the express will of God. It is even so with sickness. Because of sin, sickness is the work of Satan, but as the supreme direction of this world belongs to God, it can also be regarded as the work of God. All who are acquainted with the Book of Job know how very clearly this is brought out there.

What ought to be the result of sickness? The result will be good or evil according as God or Satan shall have the victory in us. Under Satan's influence, a sick person sinks always deeper in sin. He does not recognize sin to be the cause of the chastisement, and he occupies himself exclusively with himself and with his sufferings. He desires nothing but to be healed, without dreaming of a desire for deliverance from sin. On the contrary wherever God gains the victory, sickness leads the sufferer to renounce himself, and to abandon himself to God. The history of Job illustrates this. His friends accused him, unjustly, of having committed sins of exceptional gravity, and by them to have drawn upon himself his terrible sufferings. It was, however, no such thing, since God Himself had borne him witness that he was "perfect and upright, one that feared God and eschewed evil" (Job 2:3). But in defending himself Job went too far. Instead of humbling himself in abasement before the Lord, and recognizing his hidden sins, he sought in all self-righteousness to justify himself. It was not until the Lord appeared to him that he came to say, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:6). To him sickness became a signal blessing in bringing him to know God in quite a new way, and to humble himself more than ever before Him. This is the blessing which God desires that we also may receive whenever He permits Satan to strike us with sickness, and this end is attained by all sufferers who abandon themselves unreservedly to Him.

How are we to be delivered from sickness? A father never prolongs the chastisement of his child beyond the time necessary. God, also, who has His purpose in permitting sickness, will not prolong the chastisement longer than is needful to attain His end. As soon as Job had understood Him, from the time that he condemned himself and repented in dust and ashes, through hearkening to what God had revealed to him of Himself, the chastisement was at an end. God Himself delivered him from Satan's hand and healed him of his sickness.

Would that the sick in our day understood that God has a distinct purpose in permitting the chastisement, and that as soon as it is attained, as soon as the Holy Spirit shall have led them to confess and forsake their sins and to consecrate themselves entirely to the service of the Lord, the chastisement will no longer be needed that the Lord could and would deliver them! God makes use of Satan as a wise government makes use of a jailer. He only leaves His children in his power for the given time; after which His good will is to associate us in the redemption of Him who has conquered Satan, who has withdrawn us from his domination in bearing in our stead our sins and our sicknesses.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE PRAYER OF FAITH

"The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up"
(James 5:15).

The prayer of faith! Only once does this expression occur in the Bible, and it relates to the healing of the sick. The Church has adopted this expression, but she hardly ever has recourse to the prayer of faith except for the sake of obtaining other graces; while according to Scripture it is especially intended for the healing of the sick.

- "Does the Apostle expect healing through the prayer of faith alone, or should it be accompanied by the use of remedies?"

This is generally the question which is raised. It is easily decided, if we take into consideration the power of the Church's spiritual life in the early ages: the gifts of healing bestowed on the Apostles by the Lord, augmented by the subsequent pouring out of the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:30; 5:15-16),

> Acts 4
> 30 By stretching forth Thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the Name of Thy Holy Child Jesus.
>
> Acts 5
> 15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.
> 16 There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

what Paul says of "these gifts of healing by the same Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:9), what James here insists upon when, in order to strengthen the reader in the expectation of faith, he recalls Elijah's prayer and God's wonderful answer (James 5:17-18).

> James 5
> 17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.
> 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

Does not all this clearly show that the believer is to look for healing in response to the prayer of faith alone, and without the addition of remedies?

- Another question will arise: "Does the use of remedies exclude the prayer of faith?"

To this we believe our reply should be: "No," for the experience of a large number of believers testifies that in answer to their prayers God has often blessed the use of remedies, and made them a means of healing.

- We come here to a third question: "Which is then the line to follow, that we may prove with the greatest certainty, and according to the will of God, the efficacy of the prayer of faith? Is it, according to James, in setting aside all remedies or in using remedies as believers do for the most part? In a word, is it with or without remedies that the prayer of faith best obtains the grace of God?

Which of these two methods will be most directly to the glory of God and for blessing to the sick one? Is it not perfectly simple to reply that if the prescription and the promise in James apply to believers of our time, they will find blessing in receiving them just as they were given to believers then, conforming to them on all points, expecting healing only from the Lord Himself, without having any recourse to remedies besides? It is, in fact, in this sense that Scripture always speaks of effectual faith and of the prayer of faith.

Both the laws of nature and the witness of Scripture show us that God often makes use of intermediary agencies to manifest His glory, but whether by experience or by Scripture, we know also that under the power of the fall, and the empire of our senses, our tendency is to attach more importance to the remedies than to the direct action of God. It often happens that remedies so occupy us as to intercept the presence of our God and turn us away from Him. Thus the laws and the properties of nature, which were destined to bring us back to God, have the contrary effect. This is why the Lord in calling Abraham to be the father of His chosen people had not recourse to the laws of nature (Romans 4:17-21).

Romans 4
17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before Him Whom he believed, even God, Who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.
18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.
19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb:
20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;
21 And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform.

God would form for Himself a people of faith, living more in the unseen than in the things visible; and in order to lead them into this life it was necessary to take away their confidence in ordinary means. We see therefore that it was not by the ordinary ways which He has traced in nature that God led Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, the Judges, David and many other kings of Israel. His object was to teach them by this to confide only in Him, to know Him as He is: "Thou art the God that doest wonders" (Psalm 77:14).

God wills to act in a similar way with us. It is when we seek to walk according to His prescription in James 5, abandoning the things which are seen (II Corinthians 4:18)

> 2 Corinthians 4
> 18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

to lay hold of the promise of God, and so receive directly from Him the desired healing, that we discover how much importance we have attached to earthly remedies. Doubtless there are Christians who can make use of remedies without damage to their spiritual life, but the larger number of them are apt to count much more on the remedies than on the power of God. Now the purpose of God is to lead His children into a more intimate communion with Christ, and this is just what does happen when by faith we commit ourselves to Him as our sovereign Healer, counting solely on His invisible presence. Renouncing remedies strengthens faith in an extraordinary manner. Healing becomes, then, far more than sickness, a source of numberless spiritual blessings. It makes real to us what faith can accomplish, it establishes a new tie between God and the believer, and commences in him a life of confidence and dependence. The body equally with the soul is placed under the power of the Holy Spirit, and the prayer of faith, which saves the sick, thus leads us to a life of faith, strengthened by the assurance that God manifests His presence in our earthly life.

CHAPTER XXX.

ANOINTING IN THE NAME OF THE LORD

"Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church: and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord"
(James 5:14).

"Anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." These words have given rise to controversy. Some have sought to infer from them that, very far from prescribing recourse to the prayer of faith alone, without the use of remedies, St. James had, on the contrary, mentioned anointing with oil as a remedy to be employed, and that to anoint in the name of the Lord had no other signification than to rub the patient with oil. But as this prescription applies to all kinds of sickness, this would be to attribute to oil a miraculous virtue against all sickness. Let us see what the Scripture tells us about anointing with oil, and what sense it attaches to these two words.

It was the custom of the people in the East to anoint themselves with oil when they came out of the bath; it was most refreshing in a hot climate. We see also that all those who were called to the special service of God were to be anointed with oil, as a token of their

consecration to God, and of the grace they should receive from Him to fulfill their vocation. Thus the oil which was used to anoint the priests and the tabernacle was looked upon as "most holy" (Exodus 30:22-32), and wherever the Bible speaks of anointing with oil, it is an emblem of holiness and consecration. Nowhere in the Bible do we find any proof that oil was used as a remedy.

> Exodus 30
> 22 Moreover the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
> 23 Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels,
> 24 And of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin:
> 25 And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil.
> 26 And thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the testimony,
> 27 And the table and all his vessels, and the candlestick and his vessels, and the altar of incense,
> 28 And the altar of burnt offering with all his vessels, and the laver and his foot.
> 29 And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy.
> 30 And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office.
> 31 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be an holy anointing oil unto Me throughout your generations.
> 32 Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make any other like it, after the composition of it: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you.

Once indeed the anointing with oil is mentioned in connection with sickness, but its place there was evidently as a religious ceremony and not as a remedy. In Mark 6:13 we read that the twelve "cast out many devils and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." Here the healing of the sick runs parallel with the casting out of devils: both the result of miraculous power. Such was the kind of mission which Jesus commanded His disciples when He sent them two and two: "He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease" (Matthew 10:1). Thus it was the same power which permitted them either to cast out devils or to heal the sick.

But let us seek to discover what was symbolized by the anointing administered by the twelve. In the Old Testament, oil was the symbol of the gift of the Holy Spirit: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me" (Isaiah 61:1). It is said of the Lord Jesus in the New Testament: "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power" (Acts 10:38), and it is said of believers: "Ye have an unction [(anointing, ASV)] from the Holy One" (I John 2:20). Sometimes man feels the need of a visible sign, appealing to his senses, which may come to his aid to sustain his faith, and enable him to grasp the spiritual meaning. The anointing therefore should symbolize to the sick one the action of the Holy Spirit who gives the healing.

Do we then need the anointing as well as the prayer of faith? It is the Word of God which

prescribes it, and it is in order to follow out its teachings that most of those who pray for healing receive the anointing; not that they regard it as indispensable, but to show that they are ready to submit to the Word of God in all things. In the last promise made by the Lord Jesus, He ordains the laying on of hands, not the anointing, to accompany the communication of healing virtue (Mark 16:18).

> Mark 16
> 18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

When Paul circumcised Timothy, and when he took upon himself a special vow, it was to prove that he had no objection to observing the institutions of the Old Covenant so long as the liberty of the Gospel did not thereby suffer loss. In the same way, James, the head of the Church of Jerusalem, faithful in preserving as far as possible the institutions of his fathers, continued the system of the Holy Spirit. And we also should regard it, not as a remedy, but as a pledge of the mighty virtue of the Holy Spirit, as a means of strengthening faith, a point of contact and of communion between the sick one and the members of the Church who are called to anoint him with oil.

"I am the Lord that healeth thee"
(Exodus 15:26).

CHAPTER XXXI.

FULL SALVATION OUR HIGH PRIVILEGE

"Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine"
(Luke 15:31).

Please turn with me to the 15th chapter of Luke, and read the thirty-first verse: the father said,

"Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine."

Some time ago, when at Northfield, I was told by Mr. Moody that the best thing that he had heard at Keswick two years ago was this verse given by some parting minister as a closing or parting text and Mr. Moody said to himself, "Why did I not see that before?"

We may talk a great deal, and write a great deal, about the father's love to the prodigal, but when we think of the way he treated the elder brother, it brings to our hearts a truer sense of the wonderful love of the father; therefore I want to speak on this verse.

I suppose there are not a few Christians here who have got "full salvation"; but perhaps more than half those present have not got it, and, if I were to ask you, "Have you got it?" you would probably say, "I don't understand what you mean by it, what is it?" Well, the great object of our Convention is to bring you to see that full salvation is waiting for you now, that God wants you to experience it, and, if you feel you have not got it, we wish to show you how wrong it is to be without it, and then to show you how to come out of the wrong life into the right one here and now. Oh, may all who have not got the experience pray very humbly, "Oh, my Father, bring me into the full enjoyment of Thy full salvation."

First, then, the elder son, being ever with his father, had, if he liked, the privilege of two things: unceasing fellowship and unlimited partnership. But he was worse than the prodigal, for, although always at home, yet he had never known, nor enjoyed, nor understood the privileges that were his. All this fullness of fellowship had been waiting for and offered to him, but not received. While the prodigal was away from home in the far country, his elder brother was far from the enjoyment of home, while he was at home.

Unceasing Fellowship.

"Ever with me." An earthly father loves his child, and delights to make his child happy. "God is love" [1 John 4:8], and He delights to pour out His own nature to His people. So many people talk about God hiding His face; but there are only two things that ever caused God to do so, sin or unbelief. Nothing else can. It is the very nature of the sun to shine, and it cant help shining on and on. "God is love," and, speaking with all reverence, He cant help loving. We see His goodness toward the ungodly, and His compassion on the erring, but His fatherly love is manifested toward all His children.

"Ever with me"; but, you say, "Is it possible to be always happy and dwelling with God?" Yes, certainly, and there are many Scripture promises as to this. Look at the Epistle to the Hebrews, where we read of boldness to enter within the veil;

> Hebrews 6
> 19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

how often, too, does David speak of hiding "in the secret of His tabernacle," and dwelling "under the shadow of the Almighty."

> Psalm
> 27:5 For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me up upon a rock.
> 91:1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

My message is that the Lord your God desires to have you living continually in the light of His countenance. Your business, your temper, your circumstances, of which you complain as hindering, are they stronger than God? If you come and ask God to shine in and upon you, you will see and prove that He can do it, and that you as a believer may walk all the day and every day in the light of His love. That is "full salvation."

"Ever" with Thee; I never knew it, Lord, and so I did not enjoy it, but I do now.

Unlimited Partnership.

"All I have is thine." The elder son complained of the father's gracious reception of the prodigal, of all the feasting and rejoicing over his return, while to him had never been given a kid that he might make merry with his friends. The father, in the tenderness of his love, answers him, "Son, you were always in my house; you had only to ask and you would have got all you desired and required." And that is what our Father says to all His children. But you are saying, "I am so weak, I cannot conquer my sins, I cant manage to keep right, I cant do this and the other thing." No, but God can; and all the time He is saying to you: "'All that I have is thine;' for in Christ I have given it to you. All the Spirits power and wisdom, all the riches of Christ, all the love of the Father; there is nothing that I have but is thine; I as God am God, that I may love, keep, and bless thee." Thus God speaks, but it seems all a dream to some. Why are you so poor? God's Word is sure, and does He not promise all this? See in John, chapters 14 to 16, how He tells us that we may have wonderful answers to prayer if we come in Jesus' Name and abide in Him. Do we really believe that it is possible for a Christian to live such a life?

John 14
1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me.
2 In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.
3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.
4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.
5 Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way?
6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.
7 If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him.
8 Philip saith unto Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.
9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?
10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the Words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works.
11 Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works' sake.
12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father.
13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
14 If ye shall ask any thing in My Name, I will do it.
15 If ye love Me, keep My Commandments.

16 And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He
may abide with you for ever;
17 Even the Spirit of Truth; Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth
Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and
shall be in you.
18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.
19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: because I
live, ye shall live also.
20 At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.
21 He that hath My Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me:
and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will
manifest Myself to him.
22 Judas saith unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest
Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?
23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My Words:
and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode
with him.
24 He that loveth Me not keepeth not My Sayings: and the Word which ye hear is
not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me.
25 These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.
26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My
Name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance,
whatsoever I have said unto you.
27 Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give
I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.
28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye
loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for My Father is
greater than I.
29 And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass,
ye might believe.
30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh,
and hath nothing in Me.
31 But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me
Commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

John 15
1 I am the True Vine, and My Father is the Husbandman.
2 Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that
beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.
3 Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you.
4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it
abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me.
5 I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the
same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing.
6 If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men
gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.
7 If ye abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it
shall be done unto you.
8 Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My

disciples.
9 As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love.
10 If ye keep My Commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept
My Father's Commandments, and abide in His love.
11 These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and
that your joy might be full.
12 This is My Commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.
13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.
14 Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.
15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord
doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father
I have made known unto you.
16 Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye
should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever
ye shall ask of the Father in My Name, He may give it you.
17 These things I command you, that ye love one another.
18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you.
19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not
of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth
you.
20 Remember the Word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his
lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept
My Saying, they will keep yours also.
21 But all these things will they do unto you for My Name's sake, because they
know not Him that sent Me.
22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they
have no cloak for their sin.
23 He that hateth Me hateth My Father also.
24 If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had
not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father.
25 But this cometh to pass, that the Word might be fulfilled that is written in their
law, They hated Me without a cause.
26 But when the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father,
even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of
Me:
27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the
beginning.

John 16
1 These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.
2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever
killeth you will think that he doeth God service.
3 And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the
Father, nor Me.
4 But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may
remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the
beginning, because I was with you.
5 But now I go My way to Him that sent Me; and none of you asketh Me,
Whither goest Thou?

6 But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.
7 Nevertheless I tell you the Truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I
go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send
Him unto you.
8 And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness,
and of judgment:
9 Of sin, because they believe not on Me;
10 Of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more;
11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.
12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.
13 Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all
Truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall
He speak: and He will show you things to come.
14 He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you.
15 All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of
Mine, and shall show it unto you.
16 A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and ye shall
see Me, because I go to the Father.
17 Then said some of His disciples among themselves, What is this that He saith
unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and ye
shall see Me: and, Because I go to the Father?
18 They said therefore, What is this that He saith, A little while? we cannot tell
what He saith.
19 Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask Him, and said unto them, Do
ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see Me:
and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me?
20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world
shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.
21 A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as
soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for
joy that a man is born into the world.
22 And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart
shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.
23 And in that day ye shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you,
Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you.
24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name: ask, and ye shall receive, that
your joy may be full.
25 These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I
shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the
Father.
26 At that day ye shall ask in My Name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray
the Father for you:
27 For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have
believed that I came out from God.
28 I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the
world, and go to the Father.
29 His disciples said unto Him, Lo, now speakest Thou plainly, and speakest no
proverb.
30 Now are we sure that Thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man

should ask Thee: by this we believe that Thou camest forth from God.
31 Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?
32 Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.
33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Now, we have looked at this high privilege which is for all, so we pass on to consider our second point: The Low Experience of many of God's dear children. What is it? Just living in poverty and starvation. The eider son, the child of a rich man, living in utter poverty!-- never had a kid,

Luke 15
29 And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

while all that was his father's was his just exactly the state of many a child of God. The way He wants us to live is in the fullest fellowship of all His blessings, yet what a contrast!

Ask some if their lives are full of joy; why, they don't even believe it is possible to be always happy and holy. "How could we get on thus in business?" they say; and they imagine that the life of fullest blessing possible to them must be one of sighing and sadness and sorrow.

I asked a dear woman at the Cape, a devoted Christian woman, how she was getting on. She answered that in her experience it was sometimes light and sometimes darkness, and argued that, as this was so in nature, the same thing held good in the kingdom of grace. So she just gave herself up to a wretched experience. But I don't read in the Bible that there is to be any night or darkness in the believers experience; on the contrary, I read, "thy sun shall no more go down" [Isaiah 60:20]; yet there are many who actually believe that there is nothing so good for them. As I said already, **nothing can hide God from us but sin and unbelief**. If you are in spiritual poverty, and there is no joy, no experience of victory over sin, temper, wandering, why is it so? "Oh," you say, "I'm too weak, I must fall." But does not the Scripture say that He is "able to keep you from falling [(stumbling)]"? [Jude 24]. A minister once told me that, although God is able, the verse does not say He is willing to do it. God does not mock us, beloved; if He says He is "able," then it is a proof of His willingness to do it. Do let us believe God's Word and examine our own experience in the light of it.

Again, are you working and bearing much fruit for God, and do people by your life see and say, "God is with that man, keeping him humble, pure, and heavenly minded"? Or are they forced to confess that you are just a very ordinary Christian, easily provoked, worldly, and not heavenly minded? That is not the life God wants us to live, brethren. We have a rich Father, and as no true earthly father would like to see his child in rags, or without shoes and proper clothing, etc., neither does our God; but He wishes to fill up our life with richest and choicest blessings. How many Sunday school teachers there are who teach, and teach, and hope for the conversion of their scholars, but yet they cant say God uses them to the conversion of any of them. They enjoy no close fellowship with God, no victory over sin, no power to convince the world. To which class do you belong? The low-level, or the fully

possessed? Confess it today. These two sons represent two classes of Christians: the prodigal away backslidden; the elder son out of full fellowship with God. They were alike poor, and the elder son needed as great a change as did the prodigal; he needed to repent and confess and claim his full privileges; and so ought all low-level Christians to repent, confess, and claim full salvation. Oh, both of you, come today and say, "Father, I have sinned" [Luke 15:18].

Now, we ask, What is the cause of this terrible discrepancy? Why the great difference in the experience, I wonder? Ask yourself, "What is the reason I am not enjoying this full blessing? God's Word speaks of it, others speak of it, and I see some who are living in it." Oh, do ask the reason; come to God and say: "Why is it I never live the life You want me to live?"

You will find the answer in our story. The elder son had an un-childlike spirit, and entertained wrong thoughts about his father; and, if you had known the real character of your Father, your life would have been all right. You have, as it were, said, "I never got a kid to make merry; my Father is rich, but He never gives. I have prayed quite enough, but God does not answer me. I hear other people say that God fills and satisfies them, but He never does that for me."

A dear minister told me once that such a life was not for everybody, that it was of God's sovereignty to give this to whomsoever He pleased. Friends, there is no doubt as to God's sovereignty. He dispenses His gifts as He will; we are not all Pauls or Peters; places at the right and left hand of God are prepared for whomsoever He will. But this is not a matter of divine sovereignty; it is a question of a child's heritage. The Father's love offers to give to every child in actual experience His full salvation. Now look at an earthly father. His children are of various ages, but all have equal right to the joy of their father's countenance. True, he gives to his son of twenty years more money than to the son of five, and he has more to speak of to the boy of fifteen than to the child of three; but, as regards his love toward them, it is all the same, and in their privileges as children they are all alike. And God's love to His dear children is all the same. Oh, do not try to throw the blame on God, but say, "I have had hard thoughts of Thee, O God, and I have sinned. As a father I have done for my children what I did not believe God was able and willing to do for me, and I have been lacking in childlike faith." Oh, do believe in the love, the willingness and power of God to give you full salvation, and a change must surely come.

Now let us consider the Way of Restoration: how to get out of this poor experience. The prodigal repented and so must those children of God who have been living within sight of, but not enjoying, His promises. Conversion is generally sudden and a long repentance is usually a long impenitence. Many in the Church of Christ think it must take a long time to get into full salvation. Yes, it will take a long time if you are to do it yourself indeed, you never will. No, no, friend, if you come and trust God it can be done in a moment. By God's grace give yourself up to Him. Don't say, "What's the use? It will do no good"; but put yourself, as you are in sin and weakness, into the bosom of your Father. God will deliver you, and you will find that it is only one step out of the darkness into the light. Say, "Father, what a wretch I have been, in being with Thee and yet not believing Thy love to me!"

Yes, I come today with a call to "repent;" addressed, not to the unsaved, but to those who know what it is to be pardoned. For have you not sinned in the hard thoughts you have had of God, and is there not a longing, a thirsting and hungering after something better? Come, then,

repent, and just believe that God does blot out the sin of your unbelief. Do you believe it? Oh, do not dishonor God by unbelief, but come today and confidently claim full salvation. Then trust in Him to keep you. This seems difficult to some; but there is no difficulty about it. God will shine His light upon you always, saying, "Son, thou art ever with me"; and all you have to do is to dwell in and walk in that light.

I began by saying there are two classes of Christians: those who enjoy full salvation, and those who do not understand about it. Well, if it is not clear to you, ask God to make it clear. But if you do understand about it, remember it is a definite act. Just let yourself go into the arms of God; hear Him say, "All is thine"; then you say, "Praise God, I believe, I accept, I give up myself to Him, and I believe God gives Himself now to me!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

YE ARE THE BRANCHES

"Ye are the branches"
(John 15:5).

What a simple thing it is to be a branch the branch of a tree, or the branch of a vine! The branch grows out of the vine, or out of the tree, and there it lives and in due time bears fruit. It has no responsibility except just to receive from the root and stem sap and nourishment. And if we only by the Holy Spirit knew our relationship to Jesus Christ, our work would be changed into the brightest and most heavenly thing upon earth. Instead of there ever being soul-weariness or exhaustion, our work would be like a new experience, linking us to Jesus as nothing else can. For, alas! is it not often true that our work comes between us and Jesus? What folly! The very work He has to do in me, and I for Him, I take up in such a way that it separates me from Christ. Many a laborer in the vineyard has complained that he has too much work, and no time for close communion with Jesus, and that his usual work weakens his inclination for prayer, and that his too much intercourse with men darkens the spiritual life. Sad thought, that the bearing of fruit should separate the branch from the vine! That must be because we have looked upon our work as something else than the branch bearing fruit. May God deliver us from every false thought about the Christian life!

Now, just a few thoughts about this blessed branch-life.

- In the first place it is a life of absolute dependence. The branch has nothing: it just depends upon the vine for everything. That word, absolute dependence, is one of the most solemn and large and precious of words. A great German theologian wrote two large volumes some years ago, to show that the whole of Calvin's theology is summed up in that one principle of absolute dependence upon God; and he was right. If you

can learn every moment of the day to depend upon God, everything will come right. You will get the higher life if you depend absolutely upon God.

Must I understand that when I have got to work, when I have to preach a sermon, or address a Bible class, or go out and visit the poor neglected ones, that all the responsibility of the work is on Christ?

That is exactly what Christ wants you to understand. Christ desires that in all your work the very foundation should be the simple, blessed consciousness: Christ must care for all.

And how does He fulfill the trust of that dependence? He does it by sending down the Holy Spirit now and then only as a special gift, for remember the relation between the vine and the branches is such that hourly, daily, unceasingly, there is the living connection maintained. The sap does not flow for a time, and then stop, and then flow again, but from moment to moment the sap flows from the vine to the branches. And just so, my Lord Jesus wants me to take that blessed position as a worker, and, morning by morning and day by day and hour by hour and step by step, in every work I have to go out to, just to abide before Him in the simple, utter helplessness of one who knows nothing, and is nothing, and can do nothing.

Absolute dependence upon God is the secret of all power in work. The branch has nothing but what it gets from the vine, and you and I can have nothing but what we get from Jesus.

- But secondly, the life of the branch is not only a life of entire dependence, but of deep restfulness. Oh, that little branch, if it could think, and if it could feel, and if it could speak and if we could have a little branch today to talk to us, and if we would say: "Come, branch of the vine, tell me, I want to learn from thee how I can be a true branch of the living Vine," what would it answer? The little branch would whisper: "Man, I hear that you are wise, and I know that you can do a great many wonderful things. I know you have much strength and wisdom given to you, but I have one lesson for you. With all your hurry and effort in Christ's work you never prosper. The first thing you need is to come and rest in your Lord Jesus. That is what I do. Since I grew out of that vine I have spent years and years, and all I have done is just to rest in the vine. When the time of spring came I had no anxious thought nor care. The vine began to pour its sap into me, and to give the bud and leaf. And when the time of summer came I had no care, and in the great heat I trusted the vine to bring moisture to keep me fresh. And in the time of harvest, when the owner came to pluck the grapes, I had no care. If there was anything in the grapes not good, the owner never blamed the branch; the blame was always on the vine. And if you would be a true branch of Christ, the living Vine, just rest on Him. Let Christ bear the responsibility."

You say: "Won't that make me slothful?" I tell you it will not. No one who learns to rest upon the living Christ can become slothful, for the closer your contact with Christ the more of the Spirit of His zeal and love will be borne in upon you. But, oh! begin to work in the midst of your entire dependence by adding to it deep restfulness. A man sometimes tries and tries to be dependent upon Christ,

but he worries himself about this absolute dependence: he tries and he cannot get it. But let him sink down into entire restfulness every day.

Rest in Christ, who can give wisdom and strength, and you do not know how that restfulness will often prove to be the very best part of your message. You plead with people and you argue, and they get the idea: There is a man arguing and striving with me. They only feel: Here are two men dealing with each other. But if you will let the deep rest of God come over you, the rest in Christ Jesus, the peace and rest and holiness of heaven, that restfulness will bring a blessing to the heart, even more than the words you speak.

- But a third thought. The branch teaches a lesson of much fruitfulness. You know the Lord Jesus repeated that word fruit often in that parable; He spoke first of fruit, and then of more fruit, and then of much fruit. Yes, you are ordained not only to bear fruit, but to bear much fruit. "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit" [John 15:8]. In the first place, Christ said: "'I am the True Vine, and My Father is the Husbandman' who has charge of Me and you." He who will watch over the connection between Christ and the branches is God; and it is in the power of God, through Christ, that we are to bear fruit.

O Christians! you know this world is perishing for the lack of workers. And it needs not only more workers. The workers are saying, some more earnestly than others, "We need not only more workers, but we need that our workers should have a new power, a different life-- that the workers should be able to bring more blessing."

What is wanting? There is wanting the close connection between the worker and the heavenly Vine. Christ, the heavenly Vine, has blessings that He could pour on tens of thousands who are perishing. Christ, the, heavenly Vine, has power to provide the heavenly grapes. But "ye are the branches," and you cannot bear heavenly fruit unless you are in close connection with Jesus Christ.

Do not confound work and fruit. There may be a good deal of work for Christ that is not the fruit of the heavenly Vine. Do not seek for work only. Oh! study this question of fruit-bearing. It means the very life and the very power and the very Spirit and the very love within the heart of the Son of God. It means the heavenly Vine Himself coming into your heart and mine.

Stand in close connection with the heavenly Vine and say: "Lord Jesus, nothing less than the sap that flows through Thyself, nothing less than the Spirit of Thy divine life is what we ask. Lord Jesus, I pray Thee let Thy Spirit flow through me in all my work for Thee."

I tell you again that the sap of the heavenly Vine is nothing but the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is nothing but the life of the heavenly Vine, and what you must get from Christ is nothing less than a strong inflow of the Holy Spirit. You need it exceedingly, and you want nothing more than that. Remember that. Do not expect Christ to give a bit of strength here, and a bit of blessing yonder, and a bit of help over there. As the vine does its work in giving its own peculiar sap to the

branch, so expect Christ to give His own Holy Spirit into your heart, and then you will bear much fruit. And if you have only begun to bear fruit, and are listening to the word of Christ in the parable, "more fruit," "much fruit," remember that in order that you should bear more fruit you just require more of Jesus in your life and heart.

- A fourth thought. The life of the branch is a life of close communion. Let us again ask: "What has the branch to do?" You know that precious, inexhaustible word that Christ used: "Abide."

> John 15
> 4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me."

Your life is to be an abiding life. And how is the abiding to be? It is to be just like the branch in the vine, abiding every minute of the day. There are the branches, in close communion, in unbroken communion, with the vine, from January to December. And cannot I live every day-- It is to me an almost terrible thing that we should ask the question-- cannot I live in abiding communion with the heavenly Vine? You say, "But I am so much occupied with other things." You may have ten hours hard work daily, during which your brain has to be occupied with temporal things; God orders it so. But the abiding work is the work of the heart, not of the brain, the work of the heart clinging to and resting in Jesus, a work in which the Holy Spirit links us to Christ Jesus. Oh, do believe that deeper down than the brain, deep down in the inner life, you can abide in Christ, so that every moment you are free the consciousness will come: Blessed Jesus, I am still in Thee. If you will learn for a time to put aside other work and to get into this abiding contact with the heavenly Vine, you will find that fruit will come.

What is the application to our life with regard to this abiding communion? What does it mean? It means close fellowship with Christ in secret prayer. I am sure there are Christians who do long for the higher life, and who sometimes have got a great blessing, and have at times found a great inflow of heavenly joy and a great outflow of heavenly gladness; and yet after a time it has passed away. They have not understood that close, personal, actual communion with Christ is an absolute necessity for daily life. Take time to be alone with Christ. Nothing in heaven or earth can free you from the necessity for that, if you are to be happy and holy Christians.

Oh, how many Christians look upon it as a burden, and a tax, and a duty, and a difficulty to get much alone with God! That is the great hindrance to our Christian life everywhere. We need more quiet fellowship with God, and I tell you in the name of the heavenly Vine that you cannot be healthy branches, branches into which the heavenly sap can flow, unless you take plenty of time for communion with God. If you are not willing to sacrifice time to get alone with Him, and give Him time every day to work in you, and to keep up the link of connection between you and Himself, He cannot give you that blessing of His unbroken fellowship. Jesus Christ asks you to live in close communion with Him.

Let every heart say: "O Christ, it is this I long for, it is this I choose." And He will gladly give it to you.

- And then my last thought. The life of the branch is a life of entire surrender. This word, "entire surrender," is a great and solemn word, and I believe we do not understand its meaning. But yet the little branch preaches it. "Have you anything to do, little branch, beside bearing grapes?" "No, nothing." "Are you fit for nothing?" "Fit for nothing!" The Bible says that a bit of vine cannot even be used as a pen; it is fit for nothing but to be burned. "And now, what do you understand, little branch, about your relation to the vine?" "My relation is just this: I am utterly given up to the vine, and the vine can give me as much or as little sap as it chooses. Here I am at its disposal, and the vine can do with me what it likes!"

Oh, we need this entire surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is one of the most difficult points to make clear, and one of the most important and needful points to explain-- what this entire surrender is. It is an easy thing for a man or a number of men to offer themselves up to God for entire consecration, and to say, "Lord, it is my desire to give up myself entirely to Thee." That is of great value and often brings very rich blessing. But the one question I ought to study quietly is: "What is meant by entire surrender?" It means that just as literally as Christ was given up entirely to God, I am given up entirely to Christ. Is that too strong? Some of you think so. Some think that never can be; that just as entirely and absolutely as Christ gave up His life to do nothing but seek the Father's pleasure, and depend on the Father absolutely and entirely, I am to do nothing but to seek the pleasure of Christ. But that is actually true. Christ Jesus came to breathe His own Spirit into us, to make us find our very highest happiness in living entirely for God, just as He did. O beloved brethren, if that is the case, then I ought to say: "Yes, as true as it is of that little branch of the vine, so true, by God's grace, I would have it be of me. I would live day by day that Christ may be able to do with me what He will."

Ah! here comes the terrible mistake that lies at the bottom of so much of our own religion. A man thinks: "I have my business and family duties, and my relations as a citizen, and all this I cannot change. And now alongside of all this I am to take in religion and the service of God as something that will keep me from sin. God help me to perform my duties properly!" That is not right. When Christ came, He came and bought the sinner with His blood. If there was a slave market here and I were to buy a slave, I should take that slave away to my own house from his old surroundings, and he would live at my house as my personal property, and I could order him about all the day. And if he were a faithful slave he would live as having no will and no interests of his own, his one care being to promote the well-being and honor of his master. And in like manner I, who have been bought with the blood of Christ, have been bought to live every day with the one thought, How can I please my Master?

Oh, we find the Christian life so difficult because we seek for God's blessing while we live in our own will. We would be glad to live the Christian life according to our own liking. We make our own plans and choose our own work, and then we ask the Lord Jesus to come in and take care that sin shall not conquer

us too much, and that we shall not go too far wrong; we ask Him to come in and give us so much of His blessing. But our relation to Jesus ought to be such that we are entirely at His disposal, and every day come to Him humbly and straightforwardly, and say: "Lord, is there anything in me that is not according to Thy will, that has not been ordered by Thee, or that is not entirely given up to Thee?" Oh, if we would wait and wait patiently, there would spring up a relationship between us and Christ so close and so tender that we should afterwards be amazed how far distant our intercourse with Him had previously been.

I know there are a great many difficulties about this question of holiness; I know that all do not think exactly the same with regard to it. But that would be to me a matter of comparative indifference if I could see that all are honestly longing to be free from every sin. But I am afraid that unconsciously there are in hearts often compromises with the idea: "We cannot be without sin; we must sin a little every day; we cannot help it." Oh, that people would actually cry to God: "Lord, do keep me from sin!" Give yourself utterly to Jesus, and ask Him to do His very utmost for you in keeping you from sin.

In conclusion, let me gather up all in one word. Christ Jesus said: "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." In other words: I, the living One who have so completely given Myself to you, am the Vine. You cannot trust Me too much. I am the Almighty Worker, full of a divine life and power. Christians, you are the branches of the Lord Jesus Christ. If there is in your heart the consciousness: I am not a strong, healthy, fruit-bearing branch, I am not closely linked with Jesus, I am not living in Him as I should be-- then listen to Him saying: "'I am the Vine,' I will receive you, I will draw you to Myself, I will bless you, I will strengthen you, I will fill you with My Spirit. I, the Vine, have taken you to be My branches; I have given Myself utterly to you; children, give yourselves utterly to Me. I have surrendered Myself as God absolutely to you; I became Man and died for you that I might be entirely yours. Come and surrender yourselves entirely to be Mine."

What shall our answer be? Oh, let it be a prayer from the depths of our heart, that the living Christ may take each one of us and link us close to Himself. Let our prayer be that He, the living Vine, shall so link each of us to Himself that we shall go on our way with our hearts singing: "He is my Vine, and I am His branch; I want nothing more-- now I have the everlasting Vine." Then when you get alone with Him, worship and adore Him, praise and trust Him, love Him and wait for His love.

"Thou art my Vine, and I am Thy branch. It is enough, my soul is satisfied. Glory to His blessed name!"

THE END

Humility

by Andrew Murray

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Chapter 1

HUMILITY: THE GLORY OF THE CREATURE

"They shall cast their crowns before the throne, so saying: Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the gloty, and the honour and the power: for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will then are, and were created. "-Rev. 4:11

When God created the universe, it was with the one object of making the creature partaker of His perfection and blessedness, and so showing forth in it the glory of His love and wisdom and power. God wished to reveal Himself in and through created beings by communicating to them as much of His own goodness and glory as they were capable of receiving. But this communication was not a giving to the creature something which it could possess in itself, a certain life or goodness, of which it had the charge and disposal.By no means. But as God is the ever-living, everpresent, ever-acting One, who upholdeth all things by the word of His power, and in whom all things exist, the relation of the creature to God could only be one of unceasing, absolute, universal dependence. As truly as God by His power once created, so truly by that same power must God every moment maintain. The creature has not only to look back to the origin and first beginning of existence, and acknowledge that it there owes everything to God; its chief care, its highest virtue, its only happiness, now and through all eternity, is to present itself an empty vessel, in which God can dwell and manifest His power and goodness.

The life God bestows is imparted not once for all, but each moment continuously, by the unceasing operation of His mighty power. Humility, the place of entire dependence on God, is, from the very nature of things, the first duty and the highest virtue of the creature, and the root of every virtue.

And so pride, or the loss of this humility, is the root of every sin and evil. It was when the now fallen angels began to look upon themselves with selfcomplacency that they were led to disobedience, and were cast down from the light of heaven into outer darkness. Even so it was, when the serpent breathed the poison of his pride, the desire to be as God, into the hearts of our first parents, that they too fell from their high estate into all the wretchedness in which man is now sunk. In heaven and earth, pride, self-exaltation, is the gate and the birth, and the curse, of hell. (See Note "A" at end of chapter.)

Hence it follows that nothing can be our redemption, but the restoration of the 'lost humility, the original and only true relation of the creature to its God. And so Jesus came to bring humility back to earth, to make us partakers of it, and by it to save us. In heaven He humbled Himself to become man. The humility we see in Him possessed Him in heaven; it brought Him, He brought it, from there. Here on earth "He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death"; His humility gave His death its value, and so became our redemption. And now the salvation He imparts is nothing less and nothing else than a communication of His own life and death, His own disposition and spirit, His own humility, as the ground and root of His relation to God and His redeeming work. Jesus Christ took the place and fulfilled the destiny of man, as a creature, by His life of perfect humility. His humility is our salvation. His salvation is our humility.

And so the life of the saved ones, of the saints, must needs bear this stamp of deliverance from sin, and full restoration to their original state; their whole relation to God and man marked by an allpervading humility. Without this there can be no true abiding in God's presence, or experience of His favor and the power of His Spirit; without this no abiding faith, or love or joy or strength. Humility is the only soil in which the graces root; the lack of humility is the sufficient explanation of every defect and failure. Humility is not so much a grace or virtue along with others; it is the root of all, because it alone takes the right attitude before God, and allows Him as God to do all.

God has so constituted us as reasonable beings, that the truer the insight into the real nature or the absolute need of a command, the readier and fuller will be our obedience to it. The call to humility has been too little regarded in the Church because its true nature and importance has been too little apprehended. It is not a something which we bring to God, or He bestows; it is simply the sense of entire nothingness, which comes when we see how truly God is all, and in which we make way for God to be all. When the creature realizes that this is the true nobility, and consents to be with his will, his mind, and his affections, the form, the vessel in which the life and glory of God are to work and manifest themselves, he sees that humility is simply acknowledging the truth of his position as creature, and yielding to God His place.

In the life of earnest Christians, of those who pursue and profess holiness, humility ought to be the chief mark of their uprightness. It is often said that it is not so. May not one reason be that in the teaching and example of the Church, it has never had that place of supreme importance which belongs to it? And that this, again, is owing to the neglect of this truth, that strong as sin is as a motive to humility, there is one of still wider and mightier influence, that which makes the angels, that which made Jesus, that which makes the holiest of saints in heaven, so humble; that the first and chief mark of the relation of the creature, the secret of his blessedness, is the humility and nothingness which leaves God free to be all?

I am sure there are many Christians who will confess that their experience has been very much like my own in this, that we had long known the Lord without realizing that meekness and lowliness of heart are to be the distinguishing feature of the disciple as they were of the Master. And further, that this humility is not a thing that will come of itself, but that it must be made the object of special desire and prayer and faith and practice. As we study the word, we shall see what very distinct and oft-repeated instructions Jesus gave His disciples on this point, and how slow they were in understanding Him. Let us, at the very commencement of our meditations, admit that there is nothing so natural to man, nothing so insidious and hidden from our sight, nothing so difficult and dangerous, as pride. Let us feel that nothing but a very determined and persevering waiting on God and Christ will discover how lacking we are in the grace of humility, and how impotent to obtain what we seek. Let us study the character of Christ until our souls are filled with the love and admiration of His lowliness. And let us believe that, when we are broken down under a sense of our pride, and our impotence to cast it out, Jesus Christ Himself will come in to impart this grace too, as a part of His wondrous life within us.

NOTE A

"All this is to make it known the region of eternity that pride can degrade the highest angels into devils, and humility raise fallen flesh and blood to the thrones of angels. Thus, this is the great end of God raising a new creation out of a fallen kingdom of angels: for this end it stands in its state of war betwixt the fire and pride of fallen angels, and the humility of the Lamb of God, that the last trumpet may sound the great truth through the depths of eternity, that evil can have no beginning but from pride, and no end but from humility. The truth is this: Pride may die in you, or nothing of heaven can live in you. Under the banner of the truth, give yourself up to the meek and humble spirit of the holy Jesus. Humility must sow seed, or there can be no reaping in Heaven. Look

not at pride only as an unbecoming temper, nor at humility only as a decent virtue: for the one is death, and the other is life; the one is all hell, the other is all heaven. So much as you have of pride within you, you have of the fallen angels alive in you; so much as you have of true humility, so much you have of the Lamb of God within you. Could you see what every stirring of pride does to your soul, you would beg of everything you meet to tear the viper from you, though with the loss of a hand or an eye. Could you see what a sweet, divine, transforming power there is in humility, how it expels the poison of your nature, and makes room for the Spirit of God to live in you, you would rather wish to be the footstool of all the world than want the smallest degree of it." --Spirit of Prayer, Pt.II, p.73, Edition of Moreton, Canterbury, 1893.

Humility

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Chapter 2

HUMILITY: THE SECRET OF REDEMPTION

"Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who emptied Himself; taking the form of a servant; and humbled Himself; becoming obedient even unto death. Wherefore God also highly exalted Him. "Phil. 2: 5-9.

No tree can grow except on the root from which it sprang. Through all its existence it can only live with the life that was in the seed that gave it being. The full apprehension of this truth in its application to the first and the Second Adam cannot but help us greatly to understand both the need and the nature of the redemption there is in Jesus.

The Need.-When the Old Serpent, he who had been cast out from heaven for his pride, whose whole nature as devil was pride, spoke his words of temptation into the ear of Eve, these words carried with them the very poison of hell. And when she listened, and yielded her desire and her will to the prospect of being as God, knowing good and evil, the poison entered into her soul and blood and life, destroying forever that blessed humility and dependence upon God which would have been our everlasting happiness. And instead of this, her life and the life of the race that sprang from her became corrupted to its very root with that most terrible of all sins and all curses, the poison of Satan's own pride. All the wretchedness of which this world has been the scene, all its wars and bloodshed among the nations, all its selfishness and suffering, all its ambitions and jealousies, all its broken hearts and embittered lives, with all its daily unhappiness, have their origin in what this cursed, hellish pride, either our own, or that of others, has brought us. It is pride that made redemption needful; it is from our pride we need above everything to be redeemed. And our insight into the need of redemption will largely depend upon our knowledge of the terrible nature of the power that has entered our being.

No tree can grow except on the root from which it sprang. The power that Satan brought from hell, and cast into man's life, is working daily, hourly, with mighty power throughout the world. Men suffer from it; they fear and fight and flee it; and yet they know not whence it comes, whence it has its terrible supremacy. No wonder they do not know where or how it is to be overcome. Pride has its root and strength in a terrible spiritual power, outside of us as well as within us; as needful as it is that we confess and deplore it as our very own, is to know it in its Satanic origin. If this leads us to utter despair of ever conquering or casting it out, it will lead us all the sooner to that supernatural power in which alone our deliverance is to be found-the redemption of the Lamb of God. The hopeless struggle against the workings of self and pride within us may indeed become still more hopeless as we think of the power of darkness behind it all; the utter despair will fit us the better for realizing and accepting a power and a life outside of ourselves too, even the humility of heaven as brought down and brought nigh by the Lamb of God, to cast out Satan and his pride.

No tree can grow except on the root from which it sprang. Even as we need to look to the first Adam and his fall to know the power of the sin within us, we need to know well the Second Adam and His power to give within us a life of humility as real and abiding and overmastering as has been that of pride. We have our life from and in Christ, as truly, yea more truly, than from and in Adam. We are to walk "rooted in Him," "holding fast the Head

from whom the whole body increaseth with the increase of God." The life of God which in the incarnation entered human nature, is the root in which we are to stand and grow; it is the same almighty power that worked there, and thence onward to the resurrection, which works daily in us. Our one need is to study and know and trust the life that has been revealed in Christ as the life that is now ours, and waits for our consent to gain possession and mastery of our whole being.

In this view it is of inconceivable importance that we should have right thoughts of what Christ is, of what really constitutes Him the Christ, and specially of what may be counted His chief characteristic, the root and essence of all His character as our Redeemer.There can be but one answer: it is His humility. What is the incarnation but His heavenly humility, His emptying Himself and becoming man? What is His life on earth but humility; His taking the form of a servant? And what is His atonement but humility? "He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death." And what is His ascension and His glory, but humility exalted to the throne and crowned with glory? "He humbled Himself, therefore God highly exalted Him." In heaven, where He was with the Father, in His birth, in His life, in His death, in His sitting on the throne, it is all, it is nothing but humility. Christ is the humility of God embodied in human nature; the Eternal Love humbling itself, clothing itself in the garb of meekness and gentleness, to win and serve and save us. As the love and condescension of God makes Him the benefactor and helper and servant of all, so Jesus of necessity was the Incarnate Humility. And so He is still in the midst of the throne, the meek and lowly Lamb of God.

If this be the root of the tree, its nature must be seen in every branch and leaf and fruit. If humility be the first, the all-including grace of the life of Jesus,-if humility be the secret of His atonement,-then the health and strength of our spiritual life will entirely depend upon our putting this grace first too, and making humility the chief thing we admire in Him, the chief thing we ask of Him, the one thing for. which we sacrifice all else. 1-See Note B (at end of this chapter)

Is it any wonder that the Christian life is so often feeble and fruitless, when the very root of the Christ life is neglected, is unknown? Is it any wonder that the joy of salvation is so little felt, when that in which Christ found it and brings it, is so little sought? Until a humility which will rest in nothing less than the end and death of self; which gives up all the honor of men as Jesus did, to seek the honor that comes from God alone; which absolutely makes and counts itself nothing, that God may be all, that the Lord alone may be exalted,-until such a humility be what we seek in Christ above our chief joy, and welcome at any price, there is very little hope of a religion that will conquer the world.

I cannot too earnestly plead with my reader, if possibly his attention has never yet been specially directed to the want there is of humility within him or around him, to pause and ask whether he sees much of the spirit of the meek and lowly Lamb of God in those who are called by His name. Let him consider how all want of love, all indifference to the needs, the feelings, the weakness of others; all sharp and hasty judgments and utterances, so often excused under the plea of being outright and honest; all manifestations of temper and touchiness and irritation; all feelings of bitterness and estrangement,have their root in nothing but pride, that ever seeks itself, and his eyes will be opened to see how a dark, shall I not say a devilish pride, creeps in almost everywhere, the assemblies of the saints not excepted. Let him begin to ask what would be the effect, if in himself and around him, if towards fellowsaints and the world, believers were really permanently guided by the humility of Jesus; and let him say if the cry of our whole heart, night and day, ought not to be, Oh for the humility of Jesus in myself and all around me! Let him honestly fix his heart on his own lack of the humility which has been revealed in the likeness of Christ's life, and in the whole character of His redemption, and he will begin to feel as if he had never yet really known what Christ and His salvation is.

Believer! study the humility of Jesus. This is the secret, the hidden root of thy redemption. Sink down into it deeper day by day. Believe with thy whole heart that this Christ, whom God has given thee, even as His divine humility wrought the work for thee, will enter in to dwell and work within thee too, and make thee what the Father would have thee be.

Note B.

"We need to know two things: 1. That our salvation consists wholly in being saved from ourselves, or that which we are by nature; 2. That in the whole nature of things nothing could be this salvation or saviour to us but such a humility of God as is beyond all expression. Hence the first unalterable term of the Saviour to fallen man: Except a man denies himself, he cannot be My disciple. Self is the whole evil of fallen nature; selfdenial is our capacity of being saved; humility is our saviour ... Self is the root, the branches, the tree, of all the evil of our fallen state. All the evils of fallen angels and men have their birth in the pride of self. On the other hand, all the virtues of the heavenly life are the virtues of humility. It is humility alone that makes the unpassable gulf between heaven and hell. What is then, or in what lies, the great struggle for eternal life? It all lies in the strife between pride and humility: pride and humility are the two master powers, the two kingdoms in strife for the eternal possession of man. There never was, nor ever will be, but one humility, and that is the one humility of Christ. Pride and self have the all of man, till man has his all from Christ. He therefore only fights the good fight whose strife is that the self-idolatrous nature which he hath from Adam may be brought to death by the supernatural humility of Christ brought to life in him."-W. Law, Address to the Clergy, p. 52. [I hope that this book of Law on the Holy Spirit may be issued by my publisher in the course of the year.]

Humility

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Chapter 3

HUMILITY IN THE LIFE OF JESUS

"I am in the midst of you as he that serveth." Luke 22: 27.

In the Gospel of John we have the inner life of our Lord laid open to us. Jesus speaks frequently of His relation to the Father, of the motives by which He is guided, of His consciousness of the power and spirit in which He acts. Though the word humble does not occur, we shall nowhere in Scripture see so clearly wherein His humility consisted. We have already said that this grace is in truth nothing but that simple consent of the creature to let God be all, in virtue of which it surrenders itself to His working alone. In Jesus we shall see how both as the Son of God in heaven, and as man upon earth, He took the place of entire subordination, and gave God the honor and the glory which is due to Him- And what He taught so often was made true to Himself: "He that humbleth him: shall be exalted." As it is written, "He humbled Himself, therefore God highly exalted Him."

Listen to the words in which our Lord speaks of His relation to the Father, and how unceasingly He uses the words not, and nothing, of Himself. The not I, in which Paul expresses his relation to Christ, is the very spirit of what Christ says of His relation the Father.

"The Son can do nothing of Himself" (John 5: 19).

"I can of My own self do nothing; My judgment is just, because I seek not Mine own will" (John 5: 30).

"I receive not glory from men" (John 5: 41).

"I am come not to do Mine own will" (John 6:38).

"My teaching is not Mine" (John 7:16)

"I am not come of Myself" (John 7:28)

"I do nothing of Myself" (John 8:28)

"I have not come of Myself, but He sent Me" (John 8: 42).

"I seek not Mine own glory" (John 8:50)

"The words that I say, I speak not from Myself" (John 14: 10).

"The word which ye hear is not Mine" (John 14: 24).

These words open to us the deepest roots of Christ's life and work. They tell us how it was that the Almighty God was able to work His mighty redemptive work through Him. They show what Christ counted the state of heart which became Him as the Son of the Father. They teach us what the essential nature and life is of that redemption which Christ accomplished and now communicates. It is this: He was nothing, that God might be all. He resigned Himself with His will and His powers entirely for the Father to work in Him. Of His own power, His own will, and His own glory, of His whole mission with all His works and His teaching,of all this He said, It is not I; I am nothing; I have given Myself to the Father to work; I am nothing, the Father is all.

This life of entire self-abnegation, of absolute submission and dependence upon the Father's will, Christ found to be one of perfect peace and joy. He lost nothing by giving all to God. God honored His trust, and did all for Him, and then exalted Him to His own right hand in glory. And because Christ had thus humbled Himself before God, and God was ever before Him, He found it possible to humble Himself before men too, and to be the Servant of all. His humility was simply the surrender of Himself to God, to allow Him to do in Him what He pleased, whatever men around might say of Him, or do to Him.

It is in this state of mind, in this spirit and disposition, that the redemption of Christ has its virtue and efficacy. It is to bring us to this disposition that we are made partakers of Christ. This is the true self-denial to which our Saviour calls us, the acknowledgment that self has nothing good in it, except as anempty vessel which God must fill, and that its claim to be or do anything may not for a moment be allowed. It is in this, above and before everything, in which the conformity to Jesus consists, the being and doing nothing of ourselves, that God may be all.

Here we have the root and nature of true humility. It is because this is not understood or sought after, that our humility is so superficial and so feeble. We must learn of Jesus, how He is meek and lowly of heart. He teaches us where true humility takes its rise and finds its strength-in the knowledge that it is God who worketh all in all, that our place is to yield to Him in perfect resignation and dependence, in full consent to be and to do nothing of ourselves. This is the life Christ came to reveal and to impart-a life to God that came through death to sin and self. If we feel that this life is too high for us and beyond our reach, it must but the more urge us to seek it in Him; it is the indwelling Christ who will live in us this life, meek and lowly. If we long for this, let us, meantime, above everything, seek the holy secret of the knowledge of the nature of God, as He every moment works all in all; the secret, of which all nature and every creature, and above all, every child of God, is to be the witness,-that it is nothing but a vessel, a channel, through which the living God can manifest the riches of His wisdom, power, and goodness. The root of all virtue and grace, of all faith and acceptable worship, is that we know that we have nothing but what we receive, and bow in deepest humility to wait upon God for it.

It was because this humility was not only a temporary sentiment, wakened up and brought into exercise when He thought of God, but the very spirit of His whole life, that Jesus was just as humble in His intercourse with men as with God. He felt Himself the Servant of God for the men whom God made and loved; as a natural consequence, He counted Himself the Servant of men, that through Him God might do His work of love. He never for a moment thought of seeking His honor, or asserting His power to vindicate Himself. His whole spirit was that of a life yielded to God to work in. It is not until Christians study the humility of Jesus as the very essence of His redemption, as the very blessedness of the life of the Son of God, as the only true relation to the Father, and therefore as that which Jesus must give us if we are to have any part with Him, that the terrible lack of actual, heavenly, manifest humility will become a burden and a sorrow, and our ordinary religion be set aside to secure this, the first and the chief of the marks of the Christ within us.

Brother, are you clothed with humility? Ask your daily life. Ask Jesus. Ask your friends. Ask the world. And begin to praise God that there is opened up to you in Jesus a heavenly humility of which you have hardly known, and through which a heavenly blessedness you possibly have never yet tasted can come in to you.

Humility

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 4

HUMILITY IN THE TEACHING OF JESUS

"Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart. "-Matt. xi. 29. "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant, even as the Son of Man came to server." Matt.10:27.

We have seen humility in the life of Christ, as He laid open His heart to us: let us listen to His teaching. There we shall hear how He speaks of it, and how far He expects men, and specially His disciples, to be humble as He was. Let us carefully study the passages, which I can scarce do more than quote, to receive the full impression of how often and how earnestly He taught it: it may help us to realize what He asks of us.

I. Look at the commencement of His ministry. In the Beatitudes with which the Sermon on the Mount opens, He speaks:"Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth." The very first words of His proclamation of the kingdom of heaven reveal the open gate through which alone we enter. The poor, who have nothing in themselves, to them the kingdom comes. The meek, who seek nothing in themselves, theirs the earth shall be. The blessings of heaven and earth are for the lowly. For the heavenly and the earthly life, humility is the secret of blessing.

2. "Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest for your souls."Jesus offers Himself as Teacher. He tells what the spirit both is, which we shall find Him as Teacher, and which we can learn areceive from Him. Meekness and lowliness the one thing He offers us; in it we shall find perfect rest of soul. Humility is to be a salvation.

3. The disciples had been disputing who would be the greatest in the kingdom, and had agreed to ask the Master (Luke 9:46; Matt. 18:3). He set a child in their midst and said, "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, shall be exalted. " "Who the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" The question is indeed a far-reaching one. What will be the chief distinction in the heavenly kingdom? The answer, none but Jesus would have given. The chief glory of heaven, the true heavenly-mindedness, the chief of the graces, is humility. "He that is least among you, the same shall be great. "

4. The sons of Zebedee had asked Jesus to sit on His right and left, the highest place in the kingdom. Jesus said it was not His to give, but the Father's, who would give it to those for whom it was prepared. They must not look or ask for it. Their thought must be of the cup and the baptism of humiliation. And then He added, "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. Even as the Son of Man came to serve. " Humility, as it is the mark of Christ the heavenly, will be the one standard of glory in heaven: the lowliest is the nearest to God. The primacy in the Church is promised to the humblest.

5. Speaking to the multitude and the disciples, of the Pharisees and their love of the chief seats, Christ said once again (Matt. 23:11), "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant." Humiliation is the only ladder to honor in God's kingdom.

6. On another occasion, in the house of a Pharisee, He spoke the parable of the guest who would be invited to come up higher (Luke 14:1-11), and added, "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." The demand is inexorable; there is no other way. Self-abasement alone will be exalted.

7. After the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, Christ spake again (Luke18: 14), "Everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." In the temple and presence and worship of God, everything is worthless that is not pervaded by deep, true humility towards God and men.

8. After washing the disciples' feet, Jesus said (John 13:14), "If I then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." The authority of command, and example, every thought, either of obedience or conformity, make humility the first and most essential element of discipleship.

9. At the Holy Supper table, the disciples still disputed who should be greatest (Luke 22:26). Jesus said, "He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. I am among you as he that serveth." The path in which Jesus walked, and which He opened up for us, the power and spirit in which He wrought out salvation, and to which He saves us, is ever the humility that makes me the servant of all.

How little this is preached. How little it is practised. How little the lack of it is felt or confessed. I do not say, how few attain to it, some recognizable measure of likeness to Jesus in His humility. But how few ever think, of making it a distinct object of continual desire or prayer. How little the world has seen it. How little has it been seen even in the inner circle of the Church.

"Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." Would God that it might be given us to believe that Jesus means this! We all know what the character of a faithful servant or slave implies. Devotion to the master's interests, thoughtful study and care to please him, delight in his prosperity and honor and happiness. There are servants on earth in whom these dispositions have been seen, and to whom the name of servant has never been anything but a glory. To how many of us has it not been a new joy in the Christian life to know that we may yield ourselves as servants, as slaves to God, and to find that His service is our highest liberty,-the liberty from sin and self? We need now to learn another lesson,-that Jesus calls us to be servants of one another, and that, as we accept it heartily, this service too will be a most blessed one, a new and fuller liberty too from sin and self. At first it may appear hard; this is only because of the pride which still counts itself something. If once we learn that to be nothing before God is the glory of the creature, the spirit of Jesus, the joy of heaven, we shall welcome with our whole heart the discipline we may have in serving even those who try to vex us. When our own heart is set upon this, the true sanctification, we shall study each word of Jesus on self-abasement with new zest, and no place will be too low, and no stooping too deep, and no service too mean or too long continued, if we may but share and prove the fellowship with Him who spake, "I am among you as he that serveth".

Brethren, here is the path to the higher life. Down, lower down! This was what Jesus ever said to the disciples who were thinking of being great in the kingdom, and of sitting on His right hand and His left. Seek not, ask not for exaltation; that is God's work. Look to it that you abase and humble yourselves, and take no place before God or man but that of servant; that is your work; let that be your one purpose and prayer. God is faithful. Just as water ever seeks and fills the lowest place, so the moment God finds the creature abased and empty, His glory and power flow in to exalt and to bless. He that humbleth himself-that must be our one careshall be exalted; that is God's care; by His mighty power and in His great love He will do it.

Men sometimes speak as if humility and meekness would rob us of what is noble and bold and manlike. Oh that all would believe that this is the nobility of the kingdom of heaven, that this is the royal spirit that the King of heaven displayed, that this is Godlike, to humble oneself, to become the servant of all! This is the path to the gladness and the glory of Christ's presence ever in us, His power ever resting on us.

Jesus, the meek and lowly One, calls us to learn of Him the path to God. Let us study the words we have been reading, until our heart is filled with the thought: My one need is humility. And let us believe that what He shows, He gives; what He is, He imparts. As the meek and lowly One, He will come in and dwell in the longing heart.

Humility

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 5

HUMILITY IN THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS

"Let him that is chief among you be as he that doth serve." -Luke 22:26.

We have studied humility in the person and teaching of Jesus; let us now look for it in the circle of His chosen companions---the twelve apostles. If, in the lack of it we find in them, the contrast between Christ and men is brought out more clearly, it will help us to appreciate the mighty change which Pentecost wrought in them, and prove how real our participation can be in the perfect triumph of Christ's humility over the pride Satan had breathed into man.

In the texts quoted from the teaching of Jesus, we have already seen what the occasions were on which the disciples had proved how entirely wanting they were in the grace of humility. Once, they had been disputing the way which of them should be the greatest Another time, the sons of Zebedee with their mother had asked for the first places--the seat on the right hand and the left. And, later on, at the Supper table on the last night, there was again a contention which should be accounted the greatest. Not that there were not moments when they indeed humbled themselves before their Lord. So it was with Peter when he cried out, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." So, too, with the disciples when they fell down and worshipped Him who had stilled the storm. But such occasional expressions of humility only bring out into stronger relief what was the habitual tone of their mind, as shown in the natural and spontaneous revelation given at other times of the place and the power of self. The study of the meaning of all this will teach us most important lessons.

First,. How much there may be of earnest and active, religion while humility is still sadly wanting.-See it in the disciples. There was in them fervent attachment to Jesus. They had forsaken all for Him. The Father had revealed to them that He was the Christ of God. They believed in Him, they loved Him, they obeyed His commandments. They had forsaken all to follow Him. When others went back, they clave to Him. They were ready to die with Him. But deeper down than all this there was a dark power, of the existence and the hideousness of which they were hardly conscious, which had to be slain and cast out, ere they could be the witnesses of the power of Jesus to save. It is even so still. We may find professors and ministers, evangelists and workers, missionaries and teachers, in whom the gifts of the Spirit are many and manifest, and who are the channels of blessing to multitudes, but of whom, when the testing time comes, or closer intercourse gives fuller knowledge, it is only too painfully manifest that the grace of humility, as an abiding characteristic, is scarce to be seen. All tends to confirm the lesson that humility is one of the chief and the highest graces; one of the most difficult of attainment; one to which our first and chiefest efforts ought to be directed; one that only comes in power, when the fullness of the Spirit makes us partakers of the indwelling Christ, and He lives within us.

Second, How impotent all external teaching and all personal effort is, to conquer pride or give the meek and lowly heart.-For three years the disciples had been in the training school of Jesus. He had told them what the chief lesson was He wished to teach them: "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." Time after time He had spoken to them, to the Pharisees, to the multitude, of humility as the only path to the glory of God.He had not

only lived before them as the Lamb of God in His divine humility, He had more than once unfolded to them the inmost secret of His life: "The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve"; "I am among you as one that serveth." He had washed their feet, and told them they were to follow His example. And yet all had availed but little. At the Holy Supper there was still the contention as to who should be greatest. They had doubtless often tried to learn His lessons, and firmly resolved not again to grieve Him. But all in vain. To teach them and us the much needed lesson, that no outward instruction,not even of Christ Himself; no argument however convincing; no sense of the beauty of humility, however deep; no personal resolve or effort, however sincere and earnest,-can cast out the devil of pride. When Satan casts out Satan, it is only to enter afresh in a mightier, though more hidden power. Nothing can avail but this, that the new nature in its divine humility be revealed in power to take the place of the old, to become as truly our very nature as that ever was.

Third, It is only by the indwelling of Christ in His divine humility that we become truly humble.We have our pride from another, from Adam; we must have our humility from Another too. Pride is ours, and rules in us with such terrible power, because it is ourself, our very nature. Humility must be ours in the same way; it must be our very self, our very nature. As natural and easy as it has been to be proud, it must be, it will be, to be humble. The promise is, "Where," even in the heart, "sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly." All Christ's teaching of His disciples, and all their vain efforts, were the needful preparation for His entering into them in divine power, to give and be in them what He had taught them to desire. In His death He destroyed the power of the devil, He put away sin, and effected an everlasting redemption. In His resurrection He received from the Father an entirely new life, the life of man in the power of God, capable of being communicated to men, and entering and renewing and filling their lives with His divine power. In His ascension He received the Spirit of the Father, through whom He might do what He could not do while upon earth, make Himself one with those He loved, actually live their life for them, so that they could live before the Father in a humility like His, because it was Himself who lived and breathed in them. And on Pentecost He came and took possession. The work of preparation and conviction, the awakening of desire and hope which His teaching had effected,was perfected by the mighty change that Pentecost wrought. And the lives and the epistles of James and Peter and John bear witness that all was changed, and that the spirit of the meek and suffering Jesus had indeed possession of them.

What shall we say to these things? Among my readers I am sure there is more than one class. There may be some who have never yet thought very specially of the matter, and cannot at once realize its immense importance as a life question for the Church and its every member. There are others who have felt condemned for their shortcomings, and have put forth very earnest efforts, only to fail and be discouraged. Others, again, may be able to give joyful testimony of spiritual blessing and power, and yet there has never been the needed conviction of what those around them still see as wanting. And still others may be able to witness that in regard to this grace too the Lord has given deliverance and victory, while He has taught them how much they still need and may expect out of the fullness of Jesus. To whichever class we belong, may I urge the pressing need there is for our all seeking a still deeper conviction of the unique place that humility holds in the religion of Christ, and the utter impossibility of the Church or the believer being what Christ would have them be, as long as His humility is not recognized as His chief glory, His first command, and our highest blessedness. Let us consider deeply how far the disciples were advanced while this grace was still so terribly lacking, and let us pray to God that other gifts may not so satisfy us, that we never grasp the fact that the absence of this grace is the secret cause why the power of God cannot do its mighty work. It is only where we, like the Son, truly know and show that we can do nothing of ourselves, that God will do all.

It is when the truth of an indwelling Christ takes the place it claims in the experience of believers, that the Church will put on her beautiful garments and humility be seen in her teachers and members as the beauty of holiness.

Humility

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 6

HUMILITY IN DAILY LIFE

"He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"-1 John 4:20.

What a solemn thought, that our love to God will be measured by our everyday intercourse with men and the love it displays; and that our love to God will be found to be a delusion, except was its truth is proved in standing the test of daily life with our fellowmen. It is even so with our humility. It is easy to think we humble ourselves before God: humility towards men will be the only sufficient proof that our humility before God is real; that humility has taken up its abode in us; and become our very nature; that we actually, like Christ, have made ourselves of no reputation. When in the presence of God lowliness of heart has become, not a posture we pray to Him, but the very spirit of our life, it will manifest itself in all our bearing towards our brethren. The lesson is one of deep import: the only humility that is really ours is not that which we try to show before God in prayer, but that which we carry with us, and carry out, in our ordinary conduct; the insignficances of daily life are the importances and the tests of eternity, because they prove what really is the spirit that possesses us. It is in our most unguarded moments that we really show and see what we are. To know the humble man, to know how the humble man behaves, you must follow him in the common course of daily life.

Is not this what Jesus taught? It was when the disciples disputed who should be greatest; when He saw how the Pharisees loved the chief place at feasts and the chief seats in the synagogues; when He had given them the example of washing their feet,-that He taught His lessons of humility. Humility before God is nothing if not proved in humility before men.

It is even so in the teaching of Paul. To the Romans He writes: "In honor preferring one another"; "Set not your mind on high things, but condescend to those that are lowly." "Be not wise in your own conceit." To the Corinthians: "Love," and there is no love without humility as its root, "vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, seeketh not its own, is not provoked." To the Galatians: "Through love be servants one of another. Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another." To the Ephesians, immediately after the three wonderful chapters on the heavenly life: "Therefore, walk with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love"; "Giving thanks always, subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ." To the Philippians: "Doing nothing through faction or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind, each counting other better than himself. Have the mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, and humbled Himself." And to the Colossians: "Put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering, forebearing one another, and forgiving each other, even as the Lord forgave you." It is in our relation to one another, in our treatment of one another, that the true lowliness of mind and the heart of humility are to be seen. Our humility before God has no value, but as it prepares us to reveal the humility of Jesus to our fellow-men. Let us study humility in daily life in the light of these words.

The humble man seeks at all times to act up to the rule, "In honor preferring one another; Servants one of another; Each counting others better than himself Subjecting yourselves one to another." The question is often asked, how

we can count others better than ourselves, when we see that they are far below us in wisdom and in holiness, in natural gifts, or in grace received. The question proves at once how little we understand what real lowliness of mind is. True humility comes when, in the, light of God, we have seen ourselves to be nothing, have consented to part with and cast away self, to let God be all. The soul that has done this, sand can say, So have I lost myself in finding Thee, no longer compares itself with others. It has given up forever every thought of self in God's presence; it meets its fellow-men as one who is nothing, and seeks nothing for itself; who is a servant of God, and for His sake a servant of all. A faithful servant may be wiser than the master, and yet retain the true spirit and posture of the servant. The humble man looks upon every, the feeblest and unworthiest, child of God, and honors him and prefers him in honor as the son of a King. The spirit of Him who washed the disciples' feet, makes it a joy to us to be indeed the least, to be servants one of another.

The humble man feels no jealousy-or envy. He can praise God when others are preferred and blessed before him. He can bear to hear others praised and himself forgotten, because in God's presence he has learnt to say with Paul, "I am nothing." He has received the spirit of Jesus, who pleased not Himself, and sought not His own honor, as the spirit of his life.

Amid what are considered the temptations to impatience and touchiness, to hard thoughts and sharp words, which come from the failings and sins of fellow-Christians, the humble man carries the oft repeated injunction in his heart, and shows it in his life, "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, even as the Lord forgave you." He has learnt that in putting on the Lord Jesus he has put on the heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and long-suffering. Jesus has taken the place of self, and it is not an impossibility to forgive as Jesus forgave. His humility does not consist merely in thoughts or words of self depreciation, but, as Paul puts it, in "a heart of humility," encompassed by compassion and kindness, meekness and longsuffering,-the sweet and lowly gentleness recognized as the mark of the Lamb of God.

In striving after the higher experiences of the Christian life, the believer is often in danger of aiming at and rejoicing in what one might call the more human, the manly, virtues, such as boldness, joy, contempt of the world, zeal, self-sacrifice,-even the old Stoics taught and practised these,-while the deeper and gentler, the diviner and more heavenly graces, those which Jesus first taught upon earth, because He brought them from heaven; those which are more distinctly connected with His cross and the death of self,-poverty of spirit, meekness, humility, lowliness,-are scarcely thought of or valued. Therefore, let us put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering; and let us prove our Christ likeness, not only in our zeal for saving the lost, but before all in our intercourse with the brethren, forbearing and forgiving one another, even as the Lord forgave us.

Fellow-Christians, do let us study the Bible portrait of the humble man. And let us ask our brethren, and ask the world, whether they recognize in us the likeness to the original. Let us be content with nothing less than taking each of these texts as the promise of what God will work in us, as the revelation in words of what the Spirit of Jesus will give as a birth within us. And let each failure and shortcoming simply urge us to turn humbly and meekly to the meek and lowly Lamb of God, in the assurance that where He is enthroned in the heart, His humility and gentleness will be one of the streams of living water that flow from within us. [1]

Once again I repeat what I have said before. I feel deeply that we have very little conception of what the Church suffers from the lack of this divine humility,-the nothingness that makes room for God to prove His power. It is not long since a Christian, of an humble, loving spirit, acquainted with not a few mission stations of various societies, expressed his deep sorrow that in some cases the spirit of love and forbearance was sadly lacking. Men and women, who in Europe could each choose their own circle of friends, brought close together with others of uncongenial minds, find it hard to bear, and to love, and to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And

those who should have been fellow-helpers of each other's joy, became a hindrance and a weariness. And all for the one reason, the lack of the humility which counts itself nothing, which rejoices in becoming and being counted the least, and only seeks, like Jesus, to be the servant, the helper and comforter of others, even the lowest and unworthiest.

And whence comes it that men who have joyfully given up themselves for Christ, find it so hard to give up themselves for their brethren? Is not the blame with the Church? It has so little taught its sons that the humility of Christ is the first of the virtues, the best of all the graces and powers of the Spirit. It has so little proved that a Christlike humility is what it, like Christ, places and preaches first, as what is in very deed needed, and possible too. But let us not be discouraged. Let the discovery of the lack of this grace stir us to larger expectation from God. Let us look upon every brother who tries or vexes us, as God's means of grace, God's instrument for our purification, for our exercise of the humility Jesus our Life breathes within us. And let us have such faith in the All of God, and the nothing of self, that, as nothing in our own eyes, we may, in God's power, only seek to serve one another in love.

1- I knew Jesus, and He was very precious to my soul: but I found something in me that would not keep sweet and patient and kind. I did what I could to keep it down, but it was there. I besought Jesus to do something for me, and when I gave Him my will, He came to my heart, and took out all that would not be sweet, all that would not be kind, all that would not be patient, and then He shut the door."-George Foxe

Humility

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 7

HUMILITY AND HOLINESS

"Which say, Stand by thyself;-,for I am holier than thou. " -Isa. 65: 5.

We speak of the Holiness movement in our times, and praise God for it. We hear a great deal of seekers after holiness and professors of holiness, of holiness teaching and holiness meetings. The blessed truths of holiness in Christ, and holiness by faith, are being emphasized as never before. The great test of whether the holiness we profess to seek or to attain, is truth and life, will be whether it be manifest in the increasing humility it produces. In the creature, humility is the one thing needed to allow God's holiness to dwell in him and shine through him. In Jesus, the Holy One of God who makes us holy, a divine humility was the secret of His life and His death and His exaltation; the one infallible test of our holiness will be the humility before God and men which marks us. Humility is the bloom and the beauty of holiness.

The chief mark of counterfeit holiness is its lack of humility. Every seeker after holiness needs to be on his guard, lest unconsciously what was begun in the spirit be perfected in the flesh, and pride creep in where its presence is least expected. Two men went up into the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, the other a publican. There is no place or position so sacred but the Pharisee can enter there. Pride can lift its head in the very temple of God, and make His worship the scene of its self exaltation. Since the time Christ so exposed his pride, the Pharisee has put on the garb of the publican, and the confessor of deep sinfulness equally with the professor of the highest holiness, must be on the watch. Just when We are most anxious to have our heart the temple of God, we shall find the two men coming up to pray. And the publican will find that his danger is not from the Pharisee beside him, who despises him, but the Pharisee within who commends and exalts. In God's temple, when we think we are in the holiest of all, in the presence of His holiness, let us beware of pride. "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them."

"God, I thank thee, I am not as the rest of men, or even as this publican." It is in that which is just cause for thanksgiving, it is in the very thanksgiving which we render to God, it may be in the very confession that God has done it all, that self finds its cause of complacency. Yes, even when in the temple the language of penitence and trust in God's mercy alone is heard, the Pharisee may take up the note of praise, and in thanking God be congratulating himself. Pride can clothe itself in the garments of praise or of penitence. Even though the words, "I am not as the rest of men" are rejected and condemned, their spirit may too often be found in our feelings and language towards our fellow worshippers and fellow-men. Would you know if this really is so, just listen to the way in which Churches and Christians often speak of one another. How little of the meekness and gentleness of Jesus is to be seen. It is so little remembered that deep humility must be the keynote of what the servants of Jesus say of themselves or each other. Is there not many a Church or assembly of the saints, many a mission or convention, many a society or committee, even many a mission away in heathendom, where the harmony has been disturbed and the work of God hindered, because men who are counted saints have proved in touchiness and haste and impatience, in self-defense and selfassertion, in sharp judgments and unkind words, that they did not each reckon others better than themselves, and that their holiness has but little in it of the meekness of the saints?

In their spiritual history men may have had times of great humbling and brokenness, but what a different thing this is from being clothed with humility, from having an humble spirit, from having that lowliness of mind in which each counts himself the servant of others, and so shows forth the very mind which was also in Jesus Christ.

"Stand by; for I am holier than thou!" What a parody on holiness! Jesus the Holy One is the humble One: the holiest will ever be the humblest. There is none holy but God: we have as much of holiness as we have of God. And according to what we have of God will be our real humility, because humility is nothing but the disappearance of self in the vision that God is all. The holiest will be the humblest. Alas! though the bare-faced boasting Jew of the days of Isaiah is not often to be found, even our manners have taught us not to speak thus, how often his spirit is still seen, whether in the treatment of fellow saints or of the children of the world. In the spirit in which opinions are given, and work is undertaken, and faults are exposed, how often, though the garb be that of the publican, the voice is still that of the Pharisee: "Oh God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men."

And is there, then, such humility to be found, that men shall indeed still count themselves "less than the least of all saints," the servants of all? There is. "Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, seeketh not its own." Where the spirit of love is shed abroad in the heart, where the divine nature comes to a full birth where Christ the meek and lowly Lamb of God is truly formed within, there is given the power of a perfect love that forgets itself and finds its blessedness in blessing others, in bearing with them and honoring them, however feeble they be. Where this love enters, there God enters. And where God has entered in His power, and reveals Himself as All, there the creature becomes nothing. And where the creature becomes nothing before God; it cannot be anything but humble towards the fellow-creature. The presence of God becomes not a thing of times and seasons, but the covering under which the soul ever dwells, and its deep abasement before God becomes the holy place of His presence whence all its words and works proceed.

May God teach us that our thoughts and words and feelings concerning our fellowmen are His test of our humility towards Him, and that our humility before Him is the only power that can enable us to be always humble with our fellow-men. Our humility must be the life of Christ, the Lamb of God, within us.

Let all teachers of holiness, whether in the pulpit or on the platform, and all seekers after holiness, whether in the closet or the convention, take warning. There is no pride so dangerous, because none so subtle and insidious, as the pride of holiness. It is not that a man ever says, or even thinks, "Stand by; I am holier than thou." No, indeed, the thought would be regarded with abhorrence. But there grows up, all unconsciously, a hidden habit of soul, which feels complacency its attainments, and cannot help seeing how far it is in advance of others. It can be recognized, not always in any special self assertion or self-laudation, but simply in the absence of that deep self-abasement which cannot but be the mark of the soul that has seen the glory of God (Job 42: 5, 6; Isa.6: 5). It reveals itself, not only in words or thoughts, but in a tone, a way of speaking of others, in which those who have the gift of spiritual discernment cannot but recognize the power of self. Even the world with its keen eyes notices it, and points to it as a proof that the profession of a heavenly life does not bear any specially heavenly fruits. O brethren! let us beware. Unless we make, with each advance in what we think holiness, the increase of humility our study, we may find that we have been delighting in beautiful thoughts and feelings, in solemn acts of consecration and faith, while the only sure mark of the presence of God, the disappearance of self, was all the time wanting. Come and let us flee to Jesus, and hide ourselves in Him until we be clothed upon with His humility. That alone is our holiness.

Humility

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 8

HUMILITY AND SIN

"Sinners, of whom I am chief."-1 Tim.1:15

Humility is often identified with penitence and contrition. As a consequence, there appears to be no way of fostering humility but by keeping the soul occupied with its sin. We have learned, I think, that humility is something else and something more. We have seen in the teaching of our Lord Jesus and the Epistles how often the virtue is inculcated without any reference to sin. In the very nature of things, in the whole relation of the creature to the Creator, in the life of Jesus as He lived it and imparts it to us, humility is the very essence of holiness as of blessedness. It is the displacement of self by the enthronement of God. Where God is all, self is nothing.

But though it is this aspect of the truth I have felt it specially needful to press, I need scarce say what new depth and intensity man's sin and God's grace give to the humility of the saints. We have only to look at a man like the Apostle Paul, to see how, through his life as a ransomed and a holy man, the deep consciousness of having been a sinner lives inextinguishably. We all know the passages in which he refers to his life as a persecutor and blasphemer. "I am the least of the apostles, that am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God ...I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (I Cor. 15: 9,10). "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach to the heathen" (Eph.3: 8). "I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; howbeit I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief ...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (1 Tim. i. 13, 15). God's grace had saved him; God remembered his sins no more for ever; but never, never could he forget how terribly he had sinned. The more he rejoiced in God's salvation, and the more his experience of God's grace filled him with joy unspeakable, the clearer was his consciousness that he was a saved sinner, and that salvation had no meaning or sweetness except as the sense of his being a sinner made it precious and real to him. Never for a moment could he forget that it was a sinner God had taken up in His arms and crowned with His love.

The texts we have just quoted are often appealed to as Paul's confession of daily sinning. One has only to read them carefully in their connection, to see how little this is the case. They have a far deeper meaning, they refer to that which lasts throughout eternity, and which will give its deep undertone of amazement and adoration to the humility with which the ransomed bow before the throne, as those who have been washed from their sins in the blood of the Lamb. Never, never, even in, glory, can they be other than ransomed sinners; never for a moment in this life can God's child live in the full light of His love, but as he feels that the sin, out of which he has been saved, is his one only right and title to all that grace has promised to do. The humility with which first he came as a sinner, acquires a new meaning when he learns how it becomes him as a creature. And then ever again, the humility, in which he was born as a creature, has its deepest, richest tones of adoration, in the memory of what it is to be a monument of God's wondrous redeeming love.

The true import of what these expressions of St. Paul teach us comes out all the more strongly when we notice the

remarkable fact that, through his whole Christian course, we never find from his pen, even in those epistles in which we have the most intensely personal unbosomings, anything like confession of sin. Nowhere is there any mention of shortcoming or defect, nowhere any suggestion to his readers that he has failed in duty, or sinned against the law of perfect love. On the contrary, there are passages not a few in which he vindicates himself in language that means nothing if it does not appeal to a faultless life before God and men. "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and righteously, and unblameably we behaved ourselves toward you" (1 Thess.2:10). "Our glorying is this, this testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and sincerity of God we .behaved ourselves in the world, and more abundantly to you ward" (2 Cor.1:12). This is not an ideal or an aspiration; it is an appeal to what his actual life had been. However we may account for this absence of confession of sin, all will admit that it must point to a life in the power of the Holy Ghost, such as is but seldom realized or expected in these our days.

The point which I wish to emphasize is this-that the very fact of the absence of such confession of sinning only gives the more force to the truth that it is not in daily sinning that the secret of the deeper humility will be found, but in the habitual, never for a moment to be forgotten position, which just the more abundant grace will keep more distinctly alive, that our only place,, the only place of blessing, our one abiding position before God, must be that of those whose highest joy it is to confess that they are sinners saved by grace.

With Paul's deep remembrance of having sinned so terribly in the past, ere grace had met him, and the consciousness of being kept from present sinning, there was ever coupled the abiding remembrance of the dark hidden power of sin ever ready to come in, and only kept out by the presence and power of the indwelling Christ. "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing;"-these words of Rom. 7 describe the flesh as it is to the end. The glorious deliverance of Rom.8-"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath now made me free from the law of sin, which once led me captive"-is neither the annihilation nor the sanctification of the flesh, but a continuous victory given by the Spirit as He mortifies the deeds of the body. As health expels disease, and light swallows up darkness, and life conquers death, the indwelling of Christ through the Spirit is the health and light and life of the soul. But with this, the conviction of helplessness and danger ever tempers the faith in the momentary and unbroken action of the Holy Spirit into that chastened sense of dependence which makes the highest faith and joy the handmaids of a humility that only lives by the grace of God.

The three passages above quoted all show that it was the wonderful grace bestowed upon Paul, and of which he felt the need every moment, that humbled him so deeply. The grace of God that was with him, and enabled him to labor more abundantly than they all; the grace to preach to the heathen the unsearchable riches of Christ; the grace that was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus, it was this grace of which it is the very nature and glory that it is for sinners, that kept the consciousness of his having once sinned, and being liable to sin, so intensely alive. "Where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly." This reveals how the very essence of grace is to deal with and take away sin, and how it must ever be the more abundant the experience of grace, the more intense the consciousness of being a sinner. It is not sin, but God's grace showing a man and ever reminding him what a sinner he was, that, will keep him truly humble. It is not sin, but grace, that will make me indeed know myself a sinner, and- make the sinner's place of deepest self-abasement the place I never leave.

I fear that there are not a few who, by strong expressions of self-condemnation and self-denunciation, have sought to humble themselves, and have to confess with sorrow that a humble spirit, a "heart of humility," with its accompaniments of kindness and compassion, of meekness and forbearance, is still as far off as ever. Being occupied with self, even amid the deepest self-abhorrence, can never free us from self. It is the revelation of God, not only by the law condemning sin but by His grace delivering from it, that will make us humble. The law may break the heart with fear; it is only grace that works that sweet humility which becomes a joy to the soul as its second nature. It was the revelation of God in His holiness, drawing nigh to make Himself known in His grace,

that made Abraham and Jacob, Job and Isaiah, bow so low. It is the soul in which God the Creator, as the All of the creature in its nothingness, God the Redeemer in His grace, as the All of the sinner in his sinfulness, is waited for and trusted and worshipped, that will find itself so filled with His presence, that there will be no place for self. So alone can the promise be fulfilled: "The haughtiness of man shall be brought low, and the Lord alone be exalted in that day."

It is the sinner dwelling in the full light of God's holy, redeeming love, in the experience of that full indwelling of divine love, which comes through Christ and the Holy Spirit, who cannot but be humble. Not to be occupied with thy sin, but to be occupied with God, brings deliverance from self.

Humility

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 9

HUMILITY AND FAITH

"How can ye believe, which receive glory from one another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not?"-John 5: 44.

In an address I lately heard, the speaker said that the blessings of the higher Christian life were often like the objects exposed in a shop window,-one could see them clearly and yet could not reach them. If told to stretch out his hand and take, a man would answer, I cannot; there is a thick pane of plate-glass between me and them. And even so Christians may see clearly the blessed promises of perfect peace and rest, of overflowing love and joy, of abiding communion and fruitfulness, and yet feel that there was something between hindering the true possession. And what might that be? Nothing but pride. The promises made to faith are so free and sure; the invitations and encouragements so strong; the mighty power of God on which it may count is so near and free,-that it can only be something that hinders faith that hinders the blessing being ours. In our text Jesus discovers to us that it is indeed pride that makes faith impossible. "How can ye believe, which receive glory from one another?" As we see how in their very nature pride and faith are irreconcilably at variance, we shall learn that faith and humility are at root one, and that we never can have more of true faith than we have of true humility; we shall see that we may indeed have strong intellectual conviction and assurance of the truth while pride is kept in the heart, but that it makes the living faith, which has power with God, an impossibility.

We need only think for a moment what faith is. Is it not the confession of nothingness and helplessness, the surrender and the waiting to let God work? Is it not in itself the most humbling thing there can be, the acceptance of our place as dependents, who can claim or get or do nothing but what grace bestows?! Humility is 'simply the disposition which prepares the soul for living on trust. And every, even the most secret breathing of pride, in self-seeking, self-will, self confidence, or self exaltation, is just the strengthening of that self which cannot enter the kingdom, or possess the things of the kingdom, because it refuses to allow God to be what He is and must be there-- the All in All.

Faith is the organ or sense for the perception and apprehension of the heavenly world and its blessings. Faith seeks .the glory that comes from God, that only comes where God is All. As long as we take glory from one another, as long as ever we seek and love and jealously guard the glory of this life, the honor and reputation that comes from men, we do not seek, and cannot receive the glory that comes from God. Pride renders faith impossible. Salvation comes through a cross and a crucified Christ. Salvation is the fellowship with the crucified Christ in the Spirit of His cross. Salvation is union with and delight in, salvation is participation in, the humility of Jesus. Is it wonder that our faith is so feeble when pride still reigns so much, and we have scarce learnt even to long or pray for humility as the most needful and blessed part of salvation?

Humility and faith are more nearly allied in Scripture than many know. See it in the life of Christ. There are two cases in which He spoke of a great faith. Had not the centurion, at whose faith He marvelled, saying, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel!" spoken, "I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof"? And

had not the mother to whom He spoke, "O woman,great is thy faith!" accepted the name of dog, and said, "Yea, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs'? It is the humility that brings a soul to be nothing before God, that also removes every hindrance to faith, and makes it only fear lest it should dishonor Him by not trusting Him wholly.

Brother, have we not here the cause of failure in the pursuit of holiness? Is it not this, though we knew it not, that made our consecration and our faith so superficial and so short-lived? We had no idea to what an extent pride and self were still secretly working within us, and how alone God by His incoming and His mighty power could cast them out. We understood not how nothing but the new and divine nature, taking entirely the place of the old self, could make us really humble. We knew not that absolute, unceasing, universal humility must be the root disposition of every prayer and every approach to God as well as of every dealing with man; and that we might as well attempt to see without eyes, or live without breath, as believe or draw nigh to God or dwell in His love, without an all-prevading humility and lowliness of heart.

Brother, have we not been making a mistake in taking so much trouble to believe, while all the time there was the old self in its pride seeking to possess itself of God's blessing and riches? No wonder we could not believe. Let us change our course. Let us seek first of all to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God: He will exalt us. The cross, and the death, and the grave, into which Jesus humbled Himself, were His path to the glory of God. And they are our path. Let our one desire and our fervent prayer be, to be humbled with Him and like Him; let us accept gladly whatever can humble us before God or men;-this alone is the path to the glory of God.

You perhaps feel inclined to ask a question. I have spoken of some who have blessed experiences, or are the means of bringing blessing to others, and yet are lacking in humility. You ask whether these do not prove that they have true, even strong faith, though they show too clearly that they still seek too much the honor that cometh from men. There is more than one answer can be given. But the principal answer in our present connection is this: They indeed have a measure of faith, in proportion to which, with the special gifts bestowed upon them, is the blessing they bring to others. But in that very blessing the work of their faith is hindered, through the lack of humility. The blessing is often superficial or transitory, just because they are not the nothing that opens the way for God to be all. A deeper humility would without doubt bring a deeper and fuller blessing. The Holy Spirit not only working in them as a Spirit of power, but dwelling in them in the fullness of His grace, and specially that of humility, would through them communicate Himself to these converts for a life of power and holiness and steadfastness now all too little seen.

"How can ye believe, which receive glory from one another?" Brother! nothing can cure you of the desire of receiving glory from men, or of the sensitiveness and pain and anger which come when it is not given, but giving yourself to seek only the glory that comes from God. Let the glory of the All glorious God be everything to you. You will be freed from the glory of men and of self, and be content and glad to be nothing. Out of this nothingness you will grow strong in faith, giving glory to God, and you will find that the deeper you sink in humility before Him, the nearer He is to fulfill the every desire of your Faith.

Humility

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 10

HUMILITY AND DEATH TO SELF

"He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death." -Phil.2: 8.

Humility is the path to death, because in death it gives the highest proof of its perfection. Humility is the blossom of which death to self, is the ,perfect. fruit. Jesus humbled Himself unto death, and opened the path in which we too must walk. As there was no way for Him to prove His surrender to God to the very uttermost, or to give up and rise out of our human nature to the glory of the Father but through death, so with us too. Humility must lead us to die to self: so we prove how wholly we have given ourselves up to it and to God; so alone we are freed from fallen nature, and find the path that leads to life in God, to that full birth of the new nature, of which

We have spoken of what Jesus did for His disciples when He communicated His resurrection life to them, when in the descent of the Holy Spirit He, the glorified and enthroned Meekness, actually came from heaven Himself to dwell in them. He won the power to do this through death: in its inmost nature the life He imparted was a life out of death, a life that had been surrendered to death, and been won through death. He who came to dwell in them was Himself One who had been dead and now lives for evermore. His life, His person, His presence, bears the marks of death, of being a life begotten out of death. That life in His disciples ever bears the death marks too; it is only as the Spirit of the death, of the dying One, dwells and works in the soul, that the power of His life can be known. The first and chief of the marks of the dying of the Lord Jesus, of the death-marks that show the true follower of Jesus, is humility. For these two reasons: Only humility leads to perfect death; Only death perfects humility. Humility and death are in their very nature one: humility is the bud; in death the fruit is ripened to perfection.

Humility leads to perfect death. Humility means the giving up of self and the taking of the place of perfect nothingness before God. Jesus humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death. In death He gave the highest, the perfect proof of having given up His will to the will of God. In death He gave up His self, with its natural reluctance to drink the cup; He gave up the life He had in union with our human nature; He died to self, and the sin that tempted Him; so, as man, He entered into the perfect life of God. If it had not been for His boundless humility, counting Himself as nothing except as a servant to do and suffer the will of God, He never would have died.

This gives us the answer to the question so often asked, and of which the meaning is so seldom clearly apprehended: How can I die to self? The death to self is not your work, it is God's work. In Christ you are dead to sin the life there is in you has gone through the process of death and resurrection; you may be sure you are indeed dead to sin. But the full manifestation of the power of this death in your disposition and conduct. depends upon the measure in which the Holy Spirit imparts the power of the death of Christ And here it is that the teaching is needed: if you would enter into full fellowship with Christ in His death, and know the full deliverance from self, humble yourself. This is your one duty. Place yourself before God in your utter helplessness; consent heartily to the fact of your impotence to slay or make alive yourself; sink down into your own nothingness, in the spirit of

meek and patient and trustful surrender to God. Accept every humiliation,. look upon every fellow-man who tries or vexes you, as a means of grace to humble you. Use every opportunity of humbling' yourself before your fellow-men as a help to abide humble before God. God will accept such humbling of yourself as the proof that your whole heart desires it, as the very best prayer for it, as your preparation for His mighty work of grace, when, by the mighty strengthening of His Holy Spirit, He reveals Christ fully in you, so that He, in His form of a servant, is truly formed in you, and dwells in your heart. It is the path of humility which leads to perfect death, the full and perfect experience that we are dead in Christ.

Then follows: Only this death leads to perfect humility. Oh, beware of the mistake so many make, who would fain be humble, but are afraid to be too humble. They have so many qualifications and limitations, so many reasonings and questionings, as to what true humility is to be and to do, that they never unreservedly yield themselves to it. Beware of this. Humble yourself unto the death. It is in the death to self that humility is perfected. Be sure that at the root of all real experience of more grace, of all true advance in consecration, of all actually increasing conformity to the likeness of Jesus, there must be a deadness to self that proves itself to God and men in our dispositions and habits. It is sadly possible to speak of the death-life and the Spirit-walk, while even the tenderest love cannot but see how much there is of self. The death to self has no surer death mark than a humility which makes itself of no reputation, which empties out itself, and takes the form of a servant. It is possible to speak much and honestly of fellowship with a despised and rejected Jesus, and of bearing His cross, while the meek and lowly, the kind and gentle humility of the Lamb of God is not seen, is scarcely sought. The Lamb of God means to two things--meekness and death. Let us seek to receive Him in both forms. In Him they are inseparable: they must be in us too.

What a hopeless task if we had to do the work! Nature never can overcome, -nature, not even with--the help of grace. Self can never cast out self, even in the regenerate man. Praise God! the work has been done, and finished and perfected for ever. The death of Jesus, once and forever, is our death to self. And the ascension of Jesus, His entering once and for ever into the Holiest, has given us the Holy Spirit to communicate to us in power, and make our very own, the power of the death-life. As the soul, in the pursuit and practice of humility, follows in the steps of Jesus, its consciousness of the need of something more is awakened, its desire and hope is quickened, its faith is strengthened, and it learns to look up and claim and receive that true fullness of the Spirit of Jesus, which can daily maintain His death to self and sin in its full power, and make humility the all pervading spirit of our life. (See note "C" at end of this chapter.)

"Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus. Present yourself unto God, as alive from the dead. " The whole self consciousness of the Christian is to be imbued and characterized by the spirit that animated the death of Christ. He has ever to present himself to God as one who has died in Christ, and in Christ is alive from the dead, bearing about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus. His life ever bears the two-fold mark: its roots striking in true humility deep into the grave of Jesus, the death to sin and self; its head lifted up in resurrection power to the heaven where Jesus is.

Believer, claim in faith the death and the life of Jesus as thine. Enter in His grave into the rest from self and its work-the rest of God.- With Christ, who committed His spirit into the Father's hands, humble thyself and descend each- day into that perfect, helpless dependence upon God. God will raise thee up and exalt thee. Sink every morning in deep, deep nothingness into the grave of Jesus; every day the life of Jesus will be manifest in thee, Let a willing, loving, restful, happy humility be the mark that thou hast indeed claimed thy birthright-the baptism into the death of Christ. "By one offering He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified. "The souls that enter into His humiliation will find in Him the power to see and count self dead, and, as those who have learned and

received of Him, to walk with all lowliness and meekness, forbearing one another in love. The death-life is seen in a meekness and lowliness like that of Christ.

Note C

"To die to self, or come from under its power, is not, cannot be done, by

any active resistance we can make to it by the powers of nature. The one true way of dying to self is the way of patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God. This is the truth and perfection of dying to self ...For if I ask you what the Lamb of God means, must you not tell me that it is and means the perfection of patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God? Must you not therefore say that a desire and faith of these virtues is an application to Christ, is a giving up yourself to Him and the perfection of faith in Him? And then, because this inclination of your heart to sink down in patience, meekness, humility, and resignation to God, is truly giving up all that you are and all that you have from fallen Adam, it is perfectly leaving all you have to follow Christ; it is your highest act of faith in Him. Christ is nowhere but in these virtues; when they are there, He is in His own kingdom. Let this be the Christ you follow.

"The Spirit of divine love can have no birth in any fallen creature, till it wills and chooses to be dead to all self, in a patient, humble resignation to the power and mercy of God. "I seek for all my salvation through the merits and mediation of the meek, humble, patient, suffering Lamb of God, who alone hath power to bring forth the blessed birth of these heavenly virtues in my soul. There is no possibility of salvation but in and by the birth of the meek, humble, patient, resigned Lamb of God in our souls. When the Lamb of God hath brought forth a real birth of His own meekness, humility, and full resignation to God in our souls, then it is the birthday of the Spirit of love in our souls, which, whenever we attain, will feast our souls with such peace and joy in God as will blot out the remembrance of everything that we called peace or joy before.

"This way to God is infallible. This infallibility is grounded in the twofold character of our Saviour: 1. As He is the Lamb of God, a principle of all meekness and humility in the soul; 2. As He is the Light of heaven, and blesses eternal nature, and turns it into a kingdom of heaven,-when we are willing to get rest to our souls in meek, humble resignation to God, then it is that He, as the Light of God and heaven, joyfully breaks in upon us, turns our darkness into light, and begins that kingdom of God and of love within us, which will never have an end." --- See Wholly For God. (The whole passage deserves careful study, showing most remarkably how the continual sinking down in humility before God is, from man's side, the only way to die to self.)

Humility

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 11

HUMILITY AND HAPPINESS

"Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the strength of Christ may rest upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weakness: for when I am weak then am I strong. " -2 Cor.12:9,10.

Lest Paul should exalt himself, by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was sent him to keep him humble. Paul's first desire was to have it removed, and he besought the Lord thrice that it might depart. The answer came that the trial was a blessing; that, in the weakness and humiliation it brought, the grace and strength of the Lord could be the better manifested. Paul at once entered upon a new stage in his relation to the trial: instead of simply enduring it, he most gladly gloried in it; instead of asking for deliverance, he took pleasure in it. He had learned that the place of humiliation is the place of blessing, of power, of joy.

Every Christian virtually passes through these two stages in his pursuit of humility. In the first he fears and flees and seeks deliverance from all that can humble him. He has not yet learnt to seek humility at any cost. He has accepted the command to be humble, and seeks to obey it, though only to find how utterly he fails. He prays for humility, at times very earnestly; but in his secret heart he prays more, if not in word, then in wish, to be kept from the very things that will make him humble. He is not yet so in love with humility as the beauty of the Lamb of God, and the joy of heaven, that he would sell all to procure it. In his pursuit of it, and his prayer for it, there is still somewhat of a sense of burden and of bondage; to humble himself has not yet become the spontaneous expression of a life and a nature that is essentially humble. It has not yet become his joy and only pleasure. He cannot yet say, "Most gladly do I glory in weakness, I take pleasure in whatever humbles me."

But can we hope to reach the stage in which this will be the case? Undoubtedly. And what will it be that brings us there? That which brought Paul there-a new revelation of the Lord Jesus. Nothing but the presence of God can reveal and expel self. A clearer insight was to be given to Paul into the deep truth that the presence of Jesus will banish every desire to seek anything in ourselves, and will make us delight in every humiliation that prepares us for His fuller manifestation. Our humiliations lead us, in the experience of the presence and power of Jesus, to choose humility as our highest blessing. Let us try to learn the lessons the story of Paul teaches us.

We may have advanced believers, eminent teachers, men of heavenly experiences, who have not yet fully learnt the lesson of perfect humility, gladly glorying in weakness. We see this in Paul. The danger of exalting himself was coming very near. He knew not yet perfectly what it was to be nothing; to die, that Christ alone might live in him; to take pleasure in all that brought him low. It appears as if this were the highest lesson that he had to learn, full conformity to his Lord in that self-emptying where he gloried in weakness that God might be all.

The highest lesson a believer has to learn is humility. Oh that every Christian who seek to advance in holiness may remember this well! There may be intense consecration, and fervent zeal and heavenly experience, and yet, if it is not prevented by very special dealings of the Lord, there may be an unconscious self-exaltation with it all. Let us learn the lesson,--the highest holiness is the deepest humility; and let us remember that comes not of itself,

but only as it is made matter of special dealing on the part of our faithful Lord and His faithful servant.

Let us look at our lives in the light of this experience, and see whether we gladly glory in weakness, whether we take pleasure, as Paul did, in injuries, in necessities, in distresses. Yes, let us ask whether we have learnt to regard a reproof, just or unjust, a reproach from friend or enemy, an injury, or trouble, or difficulty into which others bring us, as above all an opportunity of proving Jesus is all to us, how our own pleasure or honor are nothing, and , how humiliation is in very truth what we take pleasure in. It is indeed blessed, the deep happiness of heaven, to be so free from self that whatever is said of us or done to us is lost and swallowed up, in the thought that Jesus is all.

Let us trust Him who took charge of Paul to take charge of us too. Paul needed special discipline, and with it special instruction, to learn, what was more precious than even the unutterable things he had heard in heaven what it is to glory in weakness and lowliness. We need it, too, oh so much. He who cared for him will care for us too. He watches over us with a jealous, loving care, "lest we exalt ourselves". When we are doing so, He seeks to discover to us the evil, and deliver us from it. In trial and weakness and trouble He seeks to bring us low, until we so learn that His grace is all, as to take pleasure in the very thing that brings us and keeps us low. His strength made perfect in our weakness, His presence filling and satisfying our emptiness, becomes the secret of a humility that need never fail. It can, as Paul, in full sight of what God works in us, and through us, ever say, "In nothing was I behind the chiefest apostles, though I am nothing." His humiliations had led him to true humility, with its wonderful gladness and glorying and pleasure in all that humbles.

"Most gladly will I glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me; wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses. "The humble man has learnt the secret of abiding gladness. The weaker he feels, the lower he sinks; the greater his humiliations appear, the more the power and the presence of Christ are his portion, ,until, as he says, " I am nothing," the word of his Lord brings ever deeper joy: "My grace is sufficient for thee."

I feel as if I must once again gather up all in the two lessons: the danger of pride is greater and nearer than we think, and the grace for humility too.

The danger of pride is greater and nearer than we think, and that especially at the time of our highest experiences. The preacher of spiritual truth with an admiring congregation hanging on his lips, the gifted speaker on a Holiness platform expounding the secrets of the heavenly life, the Christian giving testimony to a blessed experience, the evangelist moving on as in triumph, and made a blessing to rejoicing multitudes,-no man knows the hidden, the unconscious danger to which these are exposed. Paul was in danger without knowing it; what Jesus did for him is written for our admonition, that we may know our danger and know our only safety. If ever it has been said of a teacher or professor of holiness,he is so full of self; or, he does not practise what he preaches; or, his blessing has not made him humbler or gentler,-let it be said no more. Jesus, in whom we trust, can make us humble.

Yes, the grace for humility is greater and nearer, too, than we think. The humility of Jesus is our salvation: Jesus Himself is our humility. Our humility is His care and His work. His grace is sufficient for us, to meet the temptation of pride too. His strength will be perfected in our weakness. Let us choose to be weak, to be low, to be nothing. Let humility be to us joy and gladness. Let us gladly glory and take pleasure in weakness, in all that can humble us and keep us low; the power of Christ will rest upon us. Christ humbled Himself, therefore God exalted Him. Christ will humble us, and keep us humble; let us heartily consent, let us trustfully and joyfully accept all that humbles; the power of Christ will rest upon us. We shall find that the deepest humility is the secret of the truest happiness, of a joy that nothing can destroy.

Humility

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 12

HUMILITY AND EXALTATION

"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. "Luke 14:11, 18:14.

"God giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and He shall exalt you." Jas. 4:10.

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time. "1 Pet.5:6.

Just yesterday I was asked the question, How am I to conquer this pride? The answer; was simple. Two things are needed. Do what; God says is your work: humble yourself. Trust Him to do what He says is His work: He will exalt you.

The command is clear: humble yourself. That does not mean that it is your work to conquer and cast out the pride of your nature, and to form within yourself the lowliness of the holy Jesus. No, this is God's work; the very essence of that exaltation, wherein He lifts you up into the real likeness of the beloved Son. What the command does mean is this: take every opportunity of humbling yourself before God and man. In the faith of the grace that is already working in you; in the assurance of the more grace for victory that is coming; up to the light that conscience each time flashes upon the pride of the heart and its workings; notwithstanding all there may be of failure and falling, stand persistently as under the unchanging command: humble yourself. Accept with gratitude everything that God allows from within or without, from friend or enemy, in nature or in grace, to remind you of your need of humbling, and to help you to it. Reckon humility to be indeed the mother-virtue, your very first duty before God, the one perpetual safeguard of the soul, and set your heart upon it as the source of all blessing. The promise is divine and sure: He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. See that you do the one thing God asks: humble yourself. God will see that does the one thing He has promised. He will give more grace; He will exalt you in due time.

All God's dealings with man are characterized by two stages. There is the time of preparation, when command and promise, with the mingled experience of effort and impotence, of failure and partial success, with the holy expectancy of something better which these waken, train and discipline men for a higher stage. Then comes the time of fulfillment, when faith inherits the promise, and enjoys what it had so often struggled for in vain. This law holds good in every part of the Christian life, and in the pursuit of every separate virtue. And that because it is grounded in the very nature of things. In all that concerns our redemption, God must needs take the initiative. When that has been done, man's turn comes. In the effort after obedience and attainment, he must learn to know his impotence, in self-despair to die to himself, and so be fitted voluntarily and intelligently to receive from God the end, the completion of that of which he had accepted the beginning in ignorance. So, God who had been the Beginning, ere man rightly knew Him, or fully understood what His purpose was, is longed for and welcomed as the End, as the All in All.

It is even thus, too, in the pursuit of humility. To every Christian the command comes from the throne of God

Himself: humble yourself. The earnest attempt to listen and obey will be rewarded yes, rewarded-with the painful discovery of two things. The one, what depth of pride, that is of unwillingness to count oneself and to be counted nothing, to submit absolutely to God, there was, that one never knew. The other, what utter impotence there is in all our efforts, and in all our prayers too for God's help, to destroy the hideous monster. Blessed the man who now learns to put his hope in God, and to persevere, notwithstanding all the power of pride within him, in acts of humiliation before God and Men. We know the law of human nature: acts produce habits, habits breed dispositions, dispositions form the will, and the rightly-formed will is character. It is no otherwise in the work of grace. As acts, persistently repeated, beget habits and dispositions, and these strengthened the will, He who works both to will and to do comes with His mighty power and Spirit; and the humbling of the proud heart with which the' penitent saint cast himself so often before God, is rewarded with the "more grace" of the humble heart, in which the Spirit of Jesus has conquered, and brought the new nature to its maturity, and He the meek and lowly One now dwells for ever.

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will exalt you. And wherein does the exaltation consist? The highest glory of the creature is in being only a vessel, to receive and enjoy and show forth the glory of God. It can do this only as it is willing to be nothing in itself, that God may be all. Water always fills first the lowest places. The lower, the emptier a man lies before God, the speedier and the fuller will be the inflow of the divine glory. The exaltation God promises is not, cannot be, any external thing apart from Himself: all that He has to give or can give is only more of Himself, Himself to take more complete possession. The exaltation is not, like an earthly prize, something arbitrary, in no necessary connection with the conduct to be rewarded. No, but it is in its very nature the effect and result of the humbling of ourselves. It is nothing but the gift of such a divine indwelling humility, such a conformity to and possession of the humility of the Lamb of God, as fits us for receiving fully the indwelling of God.

He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Of the truth of these words Jesus Himself is the proof; of the certainty of their fulfillment to us He is the pledge. Let us take His yoke upon us and learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly of heart. If we are but willing to stoop to Him, as He has stooped to us, He will yet stoop to each one of us again, and we shall find ourselves not unequally yoked with Him. As we enter deeper into the fellowship of His humiliation, and either humble ourselves or bear the humbling of men, we can count upon it that the Spirit of His exaltation, "the Spirit of God and of glory," will rest upon us. The presence and the power of the glorified Christ will come to them that are of an humble spirit. When God can again have His rightful place in us, He will lift us up. Make His glory thy care in humbling thyself; He will make thy glory His care in perfecting thy humility, and breathing into thee, as thy abiding life, the very Spirit of His Son. As the all-pervading life of God possesses thee, there will be nothing so natural, and nothing so sweet, as to be nothing, with not a thought or wish for self, because all is occupied with Him who filleth all. "Most gladly will I glory in my weakness, that the strength of Christ may rest upon me."

Brother, have we not here the reason that our consecration and our faith have availed so little in the pursuit of holiness? It was by self and its strength that the work was done under the name of faith; it was for self and its happiness that God was called in; it was, unconsciously, but still truly, in self and its holiness that the soul rejoiced. We never knew that humility, absolute, abiding, Christ like humility and self-effacement, pervading and marking our whole life with God and man, was the most essential element of the life of the holiness we sought for.

It is only in the possession of God that I lose myself. As it is in the height and breadth and glory of the sunshine that the littleness of the mote playing in its beams is seen, even so humility is the taking our place in God's presence to be nothing but a mote dwelling in the sunlight of His love.

"How great is God! how small am I! .Lost, swallowed up in Love's immensity! God only there, not I."

May God teach us to believe that to be humble, to be nothing in His presence, is the highest attainment, and the fullest blessing of the Christian life. He speaks to us: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and with him the is of a contrite and humble spirit." Be this our portion!

"Oh, to be emptier, lowlier,
Mean, unnoticed, and unknown,
And to God a vessel holier,
Filled with Christ, and Christ alone!"

Note D.

A Secret of Secrets: Humility the Soul of True Prayer.--Till the spirit of the heart be renewed, till it is emptied of all earthly desires, and stands in an habitual hunger and thirst after God, which is the true spirit of prayer; till then, all our prayer will be, more or less, but too much like lessons given to scholars; and we shall mostly say them, only because we dare not neglect them. But be not discouraged; take the following advice, and then you may go to church without any danger of mere lip-labor or hypocrisy, although there should be a hymn or a prayer, whose language is higher than that of your heart. Do this: go to the church as the publican went to the temple; stand inwardly in the spirit of your mind in that form which he outwardly expressed, when he cast down his eyes, and could only say, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." Stand unchangeably, at least in your desire, in this form or state of heart; it will sanctify every petition that comes out of your mouth; and when anything is read or sung or prayed, that is more exalted than your heart is, if you make this an occasion of further sinking down in the spirit of the publican, you will then be helped, and highly blessed, by those prayers and praises which seem only to belong to a heart better than yours.

This, my friend, is a secret of secrets; it will help you to reap where you have not sown, and be a continual source of grace in your soul; for everything that inwardly stirs in you, or outwardly happens to you, becomes a real good to you, if it finds or excites in you this humble state of mind. For nothing is in vain, or without profit to the humble soul; it stands always in a state of divine growth; everything that falls upon it is like a dew of heaven to it. Shut up yourself, therefore, in this form of Humility; all good is enclosed in it; it is a water of heaven, that turns the fire of the fallen soul into the meekness of the divine life, and creates that oil, out of which the love to God and man gets its flame. Be enclosed, therefore, always in it; let it be as a garment wherewith you are always covered, and a girdle with which you are girt; breathe nothing but in and from its spirit; see nothing but with its eyes; hear nothing but with its ears. And then, whether you are in the church or out of the church, hearing the praises of God or receiving wrongs from men and the world, all will be edification, and everything will help forward your growth in the life of God. (The Spirit of Prayer, Pt II, p. 121)

A PRAYER FOR HUMILITY

I will here give you an infallible touchstone, that will try all to the truth. It is this: retire from the world and all conversation, only for one month; neither write, nor read, nor debate anything with yourself; stop all the former workings of your heart and mind: and, with all the strength of your heart, stand all this month, as continually as you can, in the following form of prayer to God. Offer it frequently on your knees; but whether sitting, walking, or standing, be always inwardly longing, and earnestly praying this one prayer to God: "That of His great goodness He would make known to you, and take from your heart, every kind and form and degree of Pride,

whether it be from evil spirits, or your own corrupt nature; and that He would awaken in you the deepest depth and truth of that Humility, which can make you capable of His light and Holy Spirit." Reject every thought, but that of waiting and praying in this matter from the bottom of your heart,with such truth and earnestness, as people in torment wish to pray and be delivered from it ...If you can and will give yourself up in truth and sincerity to this spirit of prayer, I will venture to affirm that, if you had twice as many evil spirits in you as Mary Magdalene had, they will all be cast out of you, and you will be forced with her to weep tears of love at the feet of the holy Jesus.**-**The Spirit of Prayer, Pt. II, p. 124

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

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Introduction

Pray Without Ceasing. Who can do this? How can one do it who is surrounded by the cares of daily life? How can a mother love her child without ceasing? How can the eyelid without ceasing hold itself ready to protect the eye? How can I breathe and feel and hear without ceasing? Because all these are the functions of a healthy, natural life. And so, if the spiritual life be healthy, under the full power of the Holy Spirit, praying without ceasing will be natural. Pray Without Ceasing. Does it refer to continual acts of prayer, in which we are to persevere till we obtain, or to the spirit of prayerfulness that should animate us all the day? It includes both. The example of our Lord Jesus shows us this. We have to enter our closet for special seasons of prayer; we are at times to persevere there in importunate prayer. We are also all the day to walk in God's presence, with the whole heart set upon heavenly things. Without set times of prayer, the spirit of prayer will be dull and feeble. Without the continual prayerfulness, the set times will not avail.

Pray Without Ceasing. Does that refer to prayer for ourselves or others? To both. It is because many confine it to themselves that they fail so in practicing it. It is only when the branch gives itself to bear fruit, more fruit, much fruit, that it can live a healthy life, and expect a rich inflow of sap. The death of Christ brought Him to the place of everlasting intercession. Your death with Him to sin and self sets you free from the care of self, and elevates you to the dignity of intercessor - one who can get life and blessing from God for others. Know your calling; begin this your work. Give yourself wholly to it, and before you know it you will be finding something of this "Praying always" within you.

Pray Without Ceasing. How can I learn it? The best way of learning to do a thing - in fact the only way - is to do it. Begin by setting apart some time every day, say ten or fifteen minutes, in which you say to God and to yourself, that you come to Him now as an intercessor for others. Let it be after your morning or evening prayer, or any other time. If you cannot secure the same time every day, do not be troubled. Only see that you do your work. Christ chose you and appointed you to pray for others. If at first you do not feel any special urgency or faith or power in your prayers, do not let that hinder you. Quietly tell your Lord Jesus of your feebleness; believe that the Holy Spirit is in you to teach you to pray, and be assured that if you begin, God will help you. God cannot help you unless you begin and keep on.

Pray Without Ceasing. How do I know What to Pray for? If once you begin, and think of all the needs around you, you will soon find enough. But to help you, this little book is issued with subjects and hints for prayer for a month. It is meant that we should use it month by month, until we know more fully how to follow the Spirit's leading, and have learned, if need be, to. make our own list of subjects, and then can dispense with it. In regard to the use of these helps, a few words may be needed.

1. How to Pray. You notice for every day two headings - the one What to Pray; the other, How to Pray. If the subjects only were given, one might fall into the routine of mentioning names and things before God, and the work would become a burden. The hints under the heading How to Pray, are meant to remind you of the spiritual nature of the work, of the need of Divine help, and to encourage faith in the certainty that God, through the Spirit, will give us grace to pray aright and will also hear our prayer. One does not at once learn to take his place boldly, and to dare to believe that he will be heard. Therefore take a few moments each day to listen to God's voice

reminding you of how certainly even you will be heard, and calling on you to pray in that faith in your Father, to claim and take the blessing you plead for. And let these words about How to Pray, enter your hearts and occupy your thoughts at other times, too. The work of intercession is Christ's great work on earth, entrusted to Him because He gave Himself a sacrifice to God for men. The work of intercession is the greatest work a Christian can do. Give yourself as a sacrifice to God for men, and the work will become your glory and your joy, too.

2. What to Pray. Scripture calls us to pray for many things: for all saints; for all men, for kings and all rulers; for all who are in adversity; for the sending forth of laborers; for those who labor in the gospel; for all converts; for believers who have fallen into sin; for one another in our own immediate circles. The Church is now so much larger than when the New Testament was written; the number of forms of work and workers is so much greater; the needs of the Church and the world are so much better known, that we need to take time and thought to see where prayer is needed, and to what our hearts are most drawn out. The Scriptural calls to prayer demand a large heart, taking in all saints, and all men, and all needs. An attempt has been made in these helps to indicate what the chief subjects are that need prayer, and that ought to interest every Christian.

It will be felt difficult by many to pray for such large spheres as are sometimes mentioned. Let it be understood that in each case we may make special intercession for our own circle of interest coming under that heading. And it is hardly needful to say, further, that where one subject appears of more special interest or urgency than another we are free for a time, day after day, to take up that subject. If only time be really given to intercession, and the spirit of believing intercession be cultivated, the object is attained. While, on the one hand, the heart must be enlarged at times to take in all, the more pointed and definite our prayer can be, the better. With this view paper is left blank on which we can write down Special Petitions we desire to urge before God.

3. Answers to Prayer. More than one little book has been published in which Christians may keep a register of their petitions, and note when they are answered. Room has been left on every page for this, so that more definite petitions with regard to individual souls or special spheres of work may be recorded, and the answer expected. When we pray for all saints, or for missions in general, it is difficult to know when or how our prayer is answered, or whether our prayer has had any part in bringing the answer. It is of extreme importance that we should prove that God hears us, and to this end take note of what answers to look for, and when they come. On the day of praying for all saints, take the saints of your congregation, or in your prayer meeting, and ask for a revival among them. Take, in connection with missions, some special station or missionary you are interested in, or more than one, and plead for blessing. And expect and look for its coming, that you may praise God.

4. Prayer Circles. In publishing this invitation to intercession, there is no desire to add another to the many existing prayer unions or praying bands. The first object is to stir the many Christians who practically, through ignorance of their calling or unbelief as to their prayer availing much, take but very little part in the work of intercession; and then to help those who do pray to some fuller apprehension of the greatness of the work, and the need of giving their whole strength to it. There is a circle of prayer which asks for prayer on the first day of every month for the fuller manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit throughout the Church. I have given the words of that invitation as subject for the first day, and taken the same thought as keynote throughout. The more one thinks of the need and the promise, and the greatness of the obstacles to be overcome in prayer, the more one feels it must become our life work day by day, that to which every other interest is subordinated. But while not forming a large prayer union, it is suggested that it may be found helpful to have small prayer circles to unite in prayer, either for one month, with some special object introduced daily along with the others, or through a year or longer, with the view of strengthening each other in the grace of intercession. If a minister were to invite some of his neighboring brethren to join for some special requests along with the printed subjects for supplication, or a number of the more earnest members of his congregation to unite in prayer for revival, some might be trained to

take their place in the great work of intercession, who now stand idle because no man hath hired them.

5. Who is Sufficient for These Things? The more we study and try to practice this grace of intercession, the more we become overwhelmed by its greatness and our feebleness. Let every such impression lead us to listen: My grace is sufficient for thee, and to answer truthfully: Our sufficiency is of God. Take courage; it is in the intercession of Christ you are called to take part. The burden and the agony, the triumph and the victory are all His. Learn from Him, yield to His Spirit in you, to know How to Pray. He gave Himself a sacrifice to God for men, that He might have the right and power of intercession. "He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." Let your faith rest boldly on His finished work. Let your heart wholly identify itself with Him in His death and His life. Like Him, give yourself to God a sacrifice for men; it is your highest nobility; it is your true and full union with Him; it will be to you, as to Him, your power of intercession. Beloved Christian! come and give your whole heart and life to intercession, and you will know its blessedness and its power. God asks nothing less; the world needs nothing less; Christ asks nothing less; let us offer to God nothing less.

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

FIRST DAY

What to Pray - For the Power of the Holy Spirit.

I bow my Knees unto the Father, that He would grant you that ye may be strengthened with power through His Spirit. - Eph. 3:14-16.

Wait for the promise of the Father. -Acts 1:4.

"the fuller manifestation of the grace and energy of the blessed Spirit of God, in the removal of all that is contrary to God's revealed will, so that we grieve not the Holy Spirit, but that He may work in mightier power in the Church, for the exaltation of Christ and the blessing of souls." God has one promise to and through His exalted Son; our Lord has one gift to His Church; the Church has one need; all prayer unites in the one petition - the power of the Holy Spirit. Make it your one prayer.

How to Pray - As a Child Asks a Father

If a son ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone! How much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him? -Luke 11:11,13.

Ask as simply and trustfully as a child asks bread. You can do this because "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts crying, Abba, Father. " This Spirit is in you to give you childlike confidence. In the faith of His praying in you, ask for the power of that Holy Spirit everywhere. Mention places or circles where you specially ask it to be seen.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

SECOND DAY

What to Pray - For the Spirit of Supplication

The Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us. -Rom. 8:26.

I will pour out the Spirit of Supplication. -Zech. 12:10.

"The evangelization of the world depends first of all upon a revival of prayer. Deeper than the need of men - aye, deep down at the bottom of our spiritless life - is the need for the forgotten secret of prevailing, world-wide prayer." Every child of God has the Holy Spirit in him to pray. God waits to give the Spirit in full measure. Ask for yourself, and all who join, the outpouring of the Spirit of Supplication. Ask it for your own prayer circle.

How to Pray - In the Spirit

With all prayer and supplication, praying at all seasons in the Spirit. -Eph.:18.

Praying in the Holy Spirit. -Jude 20.

Our Lord gave His disciples on His resurrection day the Holy Spirit to enable them to wait for the full outpouring on the day of Pentecost. It is only in the power of the Spirit already in us, acknowledged and yielded to, that we can pray for His fuller manifestation. Say to the Father, it is the Spirit of His Son in you urging you to plead His promise.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

THIRD DAY

What to Pray - For All Saints

With all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all saints. -Eph. 6: 18.

Every member of a body is interested in the welfare of the whole, and exists to help and complete the others. Believers are one body, and ought to pray, not so much for the welfare of their own church or society, but, first of all, for all saints. This large, unselfish love is the proof that Christ's Spirit and Love are teaching them to pray. Pray first for all and then for the believers around you.

How to Pray - In the Love of the Spirit

By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another. -John 13:35.

I pray that they all may be one, that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me. -John 17:21.

I beseech you, brethren, by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me. -Rom. 15:30.

Above all things being fervent in your love among yourselves. -1 Pet. 4:8.

If we are to pray we must love. Let us say to God we do love all His saints; let us say we love specially every child of His we know. Let us pray with fervent love, in the love of the Spirit.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

FOURTH DAY

What to Pray - For the Spirit Holiness

God is the Holy One. His people is a holy people. He speaks: I am holy: I am the Lord which make you holy. Christ prayed: Sanctify them. Make them holy through Truth. Paul prayed: God establish your hearts unblameable in holiness. God sanctify you wholly!

Pray for all saints - God's holy ones - throughout the Church, that the Spirit of holiness may rule them. Specially for new converts. For the saints in your own neighborhood or congregation. For any you are specially interested in. Think of their special need, weakness, or sin, and pray that God may make them holy.

How to Pray - Trusting in God 's Omnipotence

The things that are impossible with men are possible with God. When we think of the great things we ask for, of how little likelihood there is of their coming, of our own insignificance, prayer is not only wishing, or asking, but believing and accepting. Be still before God and ask Him to let you know Him as the Almighty One, and leave your petitions with Him Who doeth wonders.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

FIFTH DAY

What to Pray - That God's People May Be Kept from the World

Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me. I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest Keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. -John 17:11, 15, 16.

In the last night Christ asked three things of His disciples: that they might be kept as those who are not of the world; that they might be sanctified; that they might be one in love. You cannot do better than pray as Jesus prayed. Ask for God's people that they may be kept separate from the world and its spirit; that they, by the Spirit, may live as those who are not of the world.

How to Pray - Having Confidence before God

Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. - 1 John 3:21, 22.

Learn these words by heart. Get them into your heart. Join the ranks of those who, with John, draw near to God with an assured heart, that does not condemn them, having confidence toward God. In this spirit pray for your brother who sins (1 John 5: 16). In the quiet confidence of an obedient child, plead for those of your brethren who may be giving way to sin. Pray for all to be kept from the evil. And say often, "What we ask, we receive, because we keep and do."

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

SIXTH DAY

What to Pray - For the Spirit of Love in the Church

I pray that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them and Thou in Me; that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me . . that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them. -John 17:22, 23, 26.

The fruit of the Spirit is love. -Gal. 5:22.

Believers are one in Christ, as He is one with the Father. The love of God rests on them, and can dwell in them. Pray that the power of the Holy Ghost may so work this love in believers, that the world may see and know God's love in them. Pray much for this.

How to Pray - As One of God 's Remembrancers

I have set watchmen on thy walls, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, keep not silence, and give Him no rest. -Isa. 62:6.

Study these words until your whole soul be filled with the consciousness, I am appointed intercessor. Enter God's presence in that faith. Study the world's need with that thought - it is my work to intercede; the Holy Spirit will teach me for what and how. Let it be an abiding consciousness: My great at lifework, like Christ's, is intercession - to pray for believers and those who do not yet know God.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

SEVENTH DAY

What to Pray - For the Power of the Holy Spirit on Ministers

I beseech you that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me. -Rom. 15 :30.

He will deliver us; ye also helping together on our behalf by your supplication.. -2 Cor. 1:10, 11.

What a great host of ministers there is in Christ's Church. What need they have of prayer. What a power they might be, if they were all clothed with the power of the Holy Ghost. Pray definitely for this; long for it. Think of your minister, and ask it very specially for him. Connect every thought of the ministry, in your town or neighborhood or the world, with the prayer that all may be filled with the Spirit. Plead for them the promise,

"Tarry until ye be clothed with power from on high." Luke 24:49.

"Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you. " Acts 1 :8.

How to Pray - In Secret

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret. -Matt. 6:6.

He withdrew again into the mountain to pray, Himself alone. -Matt. 14:23; John 6:15.

Take time and realize, when you are alone with God: Here am I now, face to face with God, to intercede for His servants. Do not think you have no influence, or that your prayer will not be missed. Your prayer and faith will make a difference. Cry in secret to God for His ministers.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

EIGHTH DAY

What to Pray - For the Spirit on All Christian Workers

Ye also helping together on our behalf that for the gift bestowed upon us by means of many, thanks may be given by many on our behalf. -2 Cor. 1:11.

What multitudes of workers in connection with our churches and missions, our railways and postmen, our soldiers and sailors, our young men and young women, our fallen men and women, our poor and sick! God be praised for this! What could they not accomplish if each were living in the fullness of the Holy Spirit? Pray for them; it makes you a partner in their work, and you will praise God each time you hear of blessing anywhere.

How to Pray - With Definite Petitions

What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? - Luke 18:41.

The Lord knew what the man wanted, and yet He asked him. The utterance of our wish gives point to the transaction in which we are engaged with God, and so awakens faith and expectation. Be very definite in your petitions, so as to know what answer you may look for. Just think of the great host of workers, and ask and expect God definitely to bless them in answer to the prayer of His people. Then ask still more definitely for workers around you. Intercession is not the breathing out of pious wishes; its aim is - in believing, persevering prayer - to receive and bring down blessing.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

NINTH DAY

What to Pray - For God's Spirit on Our Mission Work

The evangelization of the world depends first of all upon a revival of prayer. Deeper than the need for men - aye, deep down at the bottom of our spiritless life, is the need for the forgotten secret of prevailing, world-wide prayer.

As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul. Then when they had fasted and prayed, they sent them away. So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed. -Acts 13 3, 4.

Pray that our mission work may all be done in this spirit - waiting on God, hearing the voice of the Spirit, sending forth men with fasting and prayer. Pray that in our churches our mission interest and mission work may be in the power of the Holy Spirit and of prayer. It is a Spirit filled, praying Church that will send out Spirit filled missionaries, mightily in prayer.

How to Pray - Take Time

I give myself unto prayer. -Ps. 109:4.

We will give ourselves continually to prayer. -Acts 6:4.

Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God. -Eccles. 5:2.

And He continued all night in prayer to God. -Luke 6:12.

Time is one of the chief standards of value. The time we give is a proof of the interest we feel. We need time with God - to realize His presence; to wait for Him to make Himself known; to consider and feel the needs we plead for; to take our place in Christ; to pray till we can believe that we have received. Take time in prayer, and pray down blessing on the mission work of the Church .

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

TENTH DAY

What to Pray - For God's Spirit on Our Missionaries

What the world needs today is not only more missionaries , but the outpouring of God 's Spirit on everyone whom He has sent out to work for Him in the foreign field.

Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be My witnesses unto the uttermost part of the earth. -Acts 1:8.

God always gives His servants power equal to the work He asks of them. Think of the greatness and difficulty of this work, - casting Satan out of his strongholds - and pray that everyone who takes part in it may receive and do all his work in the power of the Holy Ghost. Think of the difficulties of your missionaries, and pray for them.

How to Pray - Trusting God 's Faithfulness

He is faithful that promised. She counted Him faithful who promised. -Heb. 10:23; 11:11.

Just think of God's promises to His Son, concerning His kingdom; to the Church, concerning the heathen; to His servants, concerning their work; to yourself, concerning your prayer; and pray in the assurance that He is faithful, and only waits for prayer and faith to fulfill them. "Faithful is He that calleth you" (to pray), "who also will do it" (what He has promised). 1 Thess. 5:24. Take up individual missionaries, make yourself one with them, and pray till you know that you are heard. Oh, begin to live for Christ's kingdom as the one thing worth living for!

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

ELEVENTH DAY

What to Pray - For More Laborers

Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He send forth laborers into His harvest. - Matt. 9:38.

What a remarkable call of the Lord Jesus for help from His disciples in getting the need supplied. What an honor put upon prayer. What a proof that God wants prayer and will hear it. Pray for laborers, for all students in theological seminaries, training homes, Bible institutes, that they may not go, unless He fits them and sends them forth; that our churches may train their students to seek for the sending forth of the Holy Spirit; that all believers may hold themselves ready to be sent forth, or to pray for those who can go.

How to Pray - In Faith, Nothing Doubting

Jesus saith unto them, Have faith in God. Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith shall come to pass, he shall have it. -Mark 11:22, 23.

Have faith in God! Ask Him to make Himself known to you as the faithful mighty God, who worketh all in all; and you will be encouraged to believe that He can give suitable and sufficient laborers, however impossible this appears. But, remember, in answer to prayer and faith. Apply this to every opening where a good worker is needed. The work is God's. He can give the right workman. But He must be asked and waited on.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

TWELFTH DAY

What to Pray - For the Spirit to Convince the World of Sin

I will send the Comforter to you. And He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin. -John 1:7, 8.

God's one desire, the one object of Christ's being manifested, is to take away sin. The first work of the Spirit on the world is conviction of sin. Without that, no deep or abiding revival, no powerful conversion. Pray for it, that the gospel may be preached in such power of the Spirit, that men may see that they have rejected and ,crucified Christ, and cry out, What shall we do? Pray most earnestly for a mighty power of conviction of sin wherever the gospel is preached.

How to Pray - Stir Up Yourself to Take Hold of God 's Strength

Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me. -Isa. 27:5.

There is none that calleth upon Thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee. -Isa. 64:7.

Stir up the gift of God which is in thee. -2 Tim. 1:6.

First, take hold of God's strength. God is a Spirit. I cannot take hold of Him, and hold Him fast, but by the Spirit. Take hold of God's strength, and hold on till it has done for you what He has promised. Pray for the power of the Spirit to convict of sin. Second, stir up yourself - the power is in you by the Holy Spirit -- to take hold. Give your whole heart and will to it, and say, I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

THIRTEENTH DAY

What to Pray - For the Spirit of Burning

And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion shall be called holy: when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, by the Spirit of Judgment and the Spirit of Burning. -Isa. 4:3.

A washing by fire! a cleansing by judgment! He that has passed through this shall be called holy. The power of blessing for the world, the power of work and intercession that will avail, depends upon the spiritual state of the Church; and that can only rise higher as sin is discovered and put away. Judgment must begin at the house of God. There must be conviction of sin for sanctification. Beseech God to give His Spirit as a Spirit of Judgment and a Spirit of Burning - to discover and burn out sin in His people.

How to Pray - In the Name of Christ

Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do. If ye shall ask Me anything in My name, that will I do. -John 4:13, 14.

Ask in the name of your Redeemer God, who sits upon the throne. Ask what He has promised, what He gave His blood for, that sin may be put away from among His people, Ask - the prayer is after His own heart - for the spirit of deep conviction of sin to come among His people. Ask for the spirit of burning. Ask in the faith of His name - the faith of what He wills, of what He can do - and look for the answer. Pray that the Church may be blessed, to be made a blessing in the world.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

FOURTEENTH DAY

What to Pray - For the Church of the Future

That the children might not be as their fathers, a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God. -Ps. 78:8.

I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thy offspring. -Isa. 44:3.

Pray for the rising generation, who are to come after us. Think of the young men and women and children of this age, and pray for all the agencies at work among them; that in associations and societies and unions, in homes and schools, Christ may be honored, and the Holy Spirit get possession of them. Pray for the young of your neighborhood.

How to Pray - With the Whole Heart

The Lord grant thee according to thine own heart. -Ps. 20:4.

Thou hast given him his heart's desire. -Ps. 21:2.

I cried with my whole heart; hear me, O Lord. -Ps. 119:145.

God lives, and listens to every petition with His whole heart. Each time we pray the whole Infinite God is there to hear. He asks that in each prayer the whole man shall be there too; that we shall cry with our whole heart. Christ gave Himself to God for men; and so He takes up every need into His intercession. If once we seek God with our whole heart, the whole heart will be in every prayer with which we come to this God. Pray with your whole heart for the young.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

FIFTEENTH DAY

What to Pray - For Schools and Colleges

As for Me, this is My Covenant with them, saith the Lord: My Spirit that is upon thee and My Words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever. -Isa. 59:21.

The future of the Church and the world depends, to an extent we little conceive, on the education of the day. The Church may be seeking to evangelize the heathen, and be giving up her own children to secular and materialistic influences. Pray for schools and colleges, and that the Church may realize and fulfill its momentous duty of caring for its children. Pray for godly teachers.

How to Pray - Not Limiting God

They limited the Holy One of Israel. -Ps. 78:41.

He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief. -Matt. 13:5.

Is anything too hard for the Lord! -Gen. 1 8. 14.

Ah, Lord God! Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power; there is nothing too hard for Thee. Behold, I am the Lord: is there anything too hard for Me! -Jer. 32:17, 27.

Beware, in your prayer, above everything, of limiting God, not only by unbelief, but by fancying that you know what He can do. Expect unexpected things, above all that we ask or think. Each time you intercede, be quiet first and worship God in His glory. Think of what He can do, of how He delights to hear Christ, of your place in Christ, and expect great things.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

SIXTEENTH DAY

What to Pray - For the Power of the Holy Spirit in Our Sunday Schools

Thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and will save thy children. -Isa. 49:25.

Every part of the work of God's Church is His work. He must do it. Prayer is the confession that He will - the surrender of ourselves into His hands to let Him - work in us and through us. Pray for the hundreds of thousands of Sunday School teachers, that those who know God may be filled with His Spirit. Pray for your own Sunday School. Pray for the salvation of the children.

How to Pray - Boldly

We have a great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace. -Heb. 4: 14, 16.

These hints to help us in our work of intercession - what are they doing for us? Making us conscious of our feebleness in prayer? Thank God for this. It is the very first lesson we need on the way to pray the effectual prayer that availeth much. Let us persevere, taking each subject boldly to the throne of grace. As we pray we shall learn to pray and to believe and to expect with increasing boldness. Hold fast your assurance: it is at God's command you come as an intercessor. Christ will give you grace to pray aright.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

SEVENTEENTH DAY

What to Pray - For Kings and Rulers

I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgiving, be made for all men; for kings and all that are in high places; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity. -1 Tim. 2:1,2.

What a faith in the power of prayer! A few feeble and despised Christians are to influence the mighty Roman emperors, and help in securing peace and quietness. Let us believe that prayer is a power that is taken up by God in His rule of the world. Let us pray for our country and its rulers; for all the rulers of the world; for rulers in cities or districts in which we are interested. When God's people unite in this, they may count upon their prayers effecting in the unseen world more than they know. Let faith hold this fast.

How to Pray - The Prayer before God as Incense

And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should add it unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel taketh the censer; and he filled it with the fire upon the altar, and cast it upon the earth: and there followed thunder, and voices, and lightning, and an earthquake. -Rev. 8:3-5.

The same censer brings the prayer of the saints before God and casts fire upon the earth. The prayers that go up to heaven have their share in the history of this earth. Be sure that thy prayers enter God's presence.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

EIGHTEENTH DAY

What to Pray - For Peace

I exhort therefore first of all, that supplications be made for Kings and all that are in high places; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior. -1 Tim. 2:1-3.

He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth. -Ps. 46:9

What a terrible sight! - the military armaments in which the nations find their pride. What a terrible thought!. - the evil passions that may at any moment bring on war. And what a prospect for suffering and desolation that must come. God can, in answer to the prayer of His people, give peace. Let us pray for it, and for the rule of righteousness on which alone it can be stablished.

How to Pray - With the Understanding

What is it then will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding. -1 Cor. 14: 15.

We need to pray with the spirit, as the vehicle of the intercession of God's Spirit, if we are to take hold of God in faith and power. We need to pray with the understanding, if we are really to enter deeply into the needs we bring before Him. Take time to apprehend intelligently, in each subject, the nature, the extent, the urgency of the request, the ground and way and certainty of God's promise as revealed in His Word. Let the mind affect the heart. Pray with the understanding and with the spirit.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

NINETEENTH DAY

What to Pray - For the Holy Spirit on Christendom

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. -2 Tim. 3:5.

Thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead. -Rev. 3: 1.

There are five hundred million nominal Christians. The state of the majority is unspeakably awful. Formality, worldliness, ungodliness, rejection of Christ's service, ignorance, and indifference - to what an extent does all this prevail. We pray for the heathen - oh! do let us pray for those bearing Christ's name - many in worse than heathen darkness. Does not one feel as if one ought to begin to give up his life, and to cry day and night to God for souls? In answer to prayer God gives the power of the Holy Ghost.

How to Pray - In Deep Stillness of Soul

My soul is silent unto God: from Him cometh my salvation. -Ps. 62:1.

Prayer has its power in God alone. The nearer a man comes to God Himself, the deeper he enters into God's will; the more he takes hold of God, the more power in prayer. God must reveal Himself. If it please Him to make Himself known, He can make the heart conscious of His presence. Our posture must be that of holy reverence, of quiet waiting and adoration. As your month of intercession passes on, and you feel the greatness of your work, be still before God. Thus you will get power to pray.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

TWENTIETH DAY

What to Pray - For God's Spirit on the Heathen

Behold, these shall come from far; and these from the land of Sinim. -Isa. 49: 12.

Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall haste to stretch out her hands to God. -Ps. 68:31.

I the Lord will hasten it in his time. -Isa. 60:22.

Pray for the heathen, who are yet without the Word. Think of China, with her three hundred millions - a million a month dying without Christ. Think of Dark Africa, with its two hundred millions. Think of thirty millions a year going down into the thick darkness. If Christ gave His life for them, will you not do so? You can give yourself up to intercede for them. Just begin, if you have never yet begun, with this simple monthly school of intercession. The ten minutes you give will make you feel this is not enough. God's Spirit will draw you on. Persevere, however feeble you are. Ask God to give you some country or tribe to pray for. Can anything be nobler than to do as Christ did? Give your life for the heathen.

How to Pray - With Confident Expectation of an Answer

Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and will shew thee great things and difficult, which thou knowest not. -Jer. 33:3.

Thus saith the Lord God: I will yet be inquired of, that I do it. -Ezek. 3:37.

Both texts refer to promises definitely made, but their fulfillment would depend upon prayer: God would be inquired of to do it. Pray for God's fulfillment of His promises to His Son and His Church, and expect the answer. Plead for the heathen: plead God's promises.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

TWENTY-FIRST DAY

What to Pray - For God's Spirit on the Jews

I will pour out upon the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplications; and they shall look unto Me whom they pierced. -Zech. 12: 10.

Brethren, my heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved. -Rom. 10:1.

Pray for the Jews. Their return to the God of their fathers stands connected, in a way we cannot tell, with wonderful blessing to the Church, and with the coming of our Lord Jesus. Let us not think that God has foreordained all this, and that we cannot hasten it. In a divine and mysterious way God has connected his fulfillment of His promise with our prayer. His Spirit's intercession in us is God's forerunner of blessing. Pray for Israel and the work done among them. And pray too: Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus!

How to Pray - With the Intercession of the Holy Spirit

We know not **How to Pray** as we ought; but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. -Rom. 8:26.

In your ignorance and feebleness believe in the secret indwelling and intercession of the Holy Spirit within you. Yield yourself to His life and leading habitually. He will help your infirmities in prayer. Plead the promises of God even where you do not see how they are to be fulfilled. God knows the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. Pray with the simplicity of a little child; pray with the holy awe and reverence of one in whom God's Spirit dwells and prays.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

TWENTY-SECOND DAY

What to Pray - For All Who Are in Suffering

Remembering them that are in bonds, as bound with them; them that are evil entreated, as being yourselves in the body. -Heb. 13:3.

What a world of suffering we live in! How Jesus sacrificed all and identified Himself with it! Let us in our measure do so too. The persecuted, the Jews, the famine stricken millions of India, the hidden slavery of Africa, the poverty and wretchedness of our great cities - and so much more: what suffering among those who know God and who know Him not. And then in smaller circles, in ten thousand homes and hearts, what sorrow. In our own neighborhood, how many needing help or comfort. Let us have a heart for, let us think of the suffering. It will stir us to pray, to work, to hope, to love more. And in a way and time we know not God will hear our prayer.

How to Pray - Praying always and not fainting

He spake unto them a parable to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint. -Luke 18:1.

Do you not begin to feel prayer is really the help for this sinful world? What a need there is of unceasing prayer! The very greatness of the task makes us despair! What can our ten minutes intercession avail? It is right we feel this: this is the way in which God is calling and preparing us to give our life to prayer. Give yourself wholly to God for men, and amid all your work, your heart will be drawn out to men in love, and drawn up to God in dependence and expectation. To a heart thus led by the Holy Spirit, it is possible to pray always and not to faint.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

TWENTY-THIRD DAY

What to Pray - For the Holy Spirit in Your Own Work

I labor, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily. -Col. 1:29.

You have your own special work; make it a work of intercession. Paul labored, striving according to the working of God in him. Remember, God is not only the Creator, but the Great Workman, who worketh all in all. You can only do your work in His strength, by His working in you through the Spirit. Intercede much for those among whom you work, till God gives you life for them. Let us all intercede too for each other, for every worker throughout God's Church, however solitary or unknown.

How to Pray - In God's Very Presence

Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Jas. 4:8.

The nearness of God gives rest and power in prayer. The nearness of God is given to him who makes it his first object. "Draw nigh to God" seek the nearness to Him, and He will give it; "He will draw nigh to you." Then it becomes easy to pray in faith. Remember that when first God takes you into the school of intercession it is almost more for your own sake than that of others. You have to be trained to love, and wait, and pray, and believe. Only persevere. Learn to set yourself in His presence, to wait quietly for the assurance that He draws nigh. Enter His holy presence, tarry there, and spread your work before Him. Intercede for the souls you are working among. Get a blessing from God, His Spirit into your own heart, for them.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY

What to Pray - For the Spirit on Your Own Congregation

Beginning at Jerusalem. -Luke 24:47.

Each one of us is connected with some congregation or circle of believers, who are to us the part of Christ's body with which we come into most direct contact. They have a special claim on our intercession. Let it be a settled matter between God and you that you are to labor in prayer on its behalf. Pray for the minister and all leaders or workers in it. Pray for the believers according to their needs. Pray for conversions. Pray for the power of the Spirit to manifest itself. Band yourself with others to join in secret in definite petitions. Let intercession be a definite work, carried on as systematically as preaching or Sunday School. And pray, expecting an answer.

How to Pray - Continually

Watchmen, that shall never hold their peace day or night. -Isa. 62:6.

His own elect, that cry to Him day and night. -Luke 18:7

Night and day praying exceedingly that we may perfect that which is lacking in your faith. -1 Thess.3:10.

A widow indeed, hath her hope set in God, and continueth in supplications night and day. -1 Tim. 5:5.

When the glory of God, and the love of Christ, and the need of souls are revealed to us, the fire of this unceasing intercession will begin to burn in us for those who are near and those who are far off.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY

What to Pray - For More Conversions

He is able to save completely, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession. -Heb. 7:25.

We will give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word . . . And the Word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied exceedingly. -Acts 6:4, 7.

Christ's power to save, and save completely, depends on His unceasing intercession. The apostles' withdrawing themselves from other work to give themselves continually to prayer was followed by the number of the disciples multiplying exceedingly. As we, in our day, give ourselves to intercession, we shall have more and mightier conversions. Let us plead for this. Christ is exalted to give repentance. The Church exists with the Divine purpose and promise of having conversions. Let us not be ashamed to confess our sins and feebleness, and cry to God for more conversions in Christian and heathen lands, of those too whom you know and love. Plead for the salvation of sinners.

How to Pray - In Deep Humility

Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs . . . O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. -Matt. 15:27,28.

You feel unworthy and unable to pray aright. To accept this heartily, and to be content still to come and be blest in your unworthiness, is true humility. It proves its integrity by not seeking for anything, but simply trusting His grace. And so it is the very strength of a great faith, and gets a full answer. "Yet the dogs" - let that be your plea as you persevere for someone possibly possessed of the devil. Let not your littleness hinder you for a moment.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY

What to Pray - For the Holy Spirit on Young Converts

Peter and John prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost; for as yet He was fallen upon none of them: only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. - Acts 8:15, 16.

Now He which establisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; who also gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. -2 Cor. 1:21,22.

How many new converts who remain feeble; how many who fall into sin; how many who backslide entirely. If we pray for the Church, its growth in holiness and devotion to God's service, pray especially for the young converts. How many stand alone, surrounded by temptation; how many have no teaching on the Spirit in them, and the power of God to establish them; how many in heathen lands, surrounded by Satan's power. If you pray for the power of the Spirit in the Church, pray especially that every young convert may know that he may claim and receive the fullness of the Spirit.

How to Pray - Without Ceasing

As for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you. -1 Sam. 12:23.

It is sin against the Lord to escape praying for others. When once we begin to see how absolutely indispensable intercession is, just as much a duty as loving God or believing in Christ, and how we are called and bound to it as believers, we shall feel that to cease intercession is grievous sin. Let us ask for grace to take up our place as priests with joy, and give our lives to bring down the blessing of Heaven.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY

What to Pray - That God's People May Realize Their Calling

I will bless thee; and be thou a blessing: IN THEE shall ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH be blessed. -Gen. 12:2, 3.

God be merciful UNTO US, and bless US, and cause His face to shine UPON US. That Thy way may be known UPON EARTH, Thy saving health AMONG ALL NATIONS. -Ps. 67: 1,2.

Abraham was only blessed that he might be a blessing to all the earth. Israel prays for blessing, that God may be known among all nations. Every believer, just as much as Abraham, is only blessed that he may carry God's blessing to the world.

Cry to God that His people may know this, that every believer is only to live for the interests of God and His kingdom. If this truth were preached and believed and practiced, what a revolution it would bring in our mission work. What a host of willing intercessors we should have. Plead with God to work it by the Holy Spirit.

How to Pray - As One Who Has Accepted for Himself What He Asks for Others

Peter said What l have, l give unto thee ... The Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning ... God gave them the like gift, as He gave unto us. -Acts 3:6; 9:15, 17.

As you pray for this great blessing on God's people, the Holy Spirit taking entire possession of them for God's service, yield yourself to God, and claim the gift anew in faith. Let each thought of feebleness or shortcoming only make you the more urgent in prayer for others; as the blessing comes to them, you too will be helped. With every prayer for conversions or mission work, pray that God's people may know wholly they belong to Him.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY

What to Pray - That all God's People May Know the Holy Spirit

The Spirit of Truth, Whom the world knoweth not; but ye know Him; for He abideth with you, and shall be in you. -John 14:17.

Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost? -1 Cor. 6: 19.

The Holy Spirit is the power of God for the salvation of men. He only works as He dwells in the Church. He is given to enable believers to live wholly as God would have them live, in the full experience and witness of Him who saves completely. Pray God that everyone of His people may know the Holy Spirit! That He, in all His fullness, is given to them! That they cannot expect to live as their Father would have, without having Him in His fullness, without being filled with Him! Pray that all God's people, even away in churches gathered out of heathendom, may learn to say: 1 believe in the Holy Ghost.

How to Pray - Laboring Fervently in Prayer

Who is one of you, saluteth you, always reverently you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. - Col. 4:12.

To a healthy man labor is a delight; in what interests him he labors fervently. The believer who is in full health, whose heart is filled with God's Spirit, labors fervently in prayer. For what? That his brethren may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God; that they may know what God wills for them how He calls them to live, and be led and walk by the Holy Ghost. Labor fervently in prayer that all God's children may know this, as possible, as divinely sure.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

TWENTY-NINTH DAY

What to Pray - For the Spirit of Intercession

I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it to you. -John 15:16.

Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name, In that day ye shall ask in My name. -John 6:24, 26.

Has not our school of intercession taught us how little we have prayed in the name of Jesus? He promised His disciples: In that day, when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, ye shall ask in My name. Are there not tens of thousands with us mourning the lack of the power of intercession? Let our intercession today be for them and all God's children, that Christ may teach us that the Holy Spirit is in us; and what it is to live in His fullness, and to yield ourselves to His intercessional work within us. The Church and the world need nothing so much as a mighty Spirit of Intercession to bring down the power of God on earth. Pray for the descent from heaven of the Spirit of Intercession for a great prayer revival.

How to Pray - Abiding in Christ

If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done to you. -John 15:7.

Our acceptance with God, our access to Him, is all in Christ. As we consciously abide in Him we have the liberty, not a liberty to our old nature or self-will, but the Divine liberty from all self-will, to ask what we will, in the power of the new nature, and it shall be done. Let us keep this place, and believe even now that our intercession is heard, and that the Spirit of Supplication will be given all around us.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

THIRTIETH DAY

What to Pray - For the Holy Spirit with the Word of God

Our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. -1 Thess. 1:5.

Those who preached unto you the Gospel with the Holy Ghost sent forth from Heaven. -1 Pet. 1:12.

What numbers of Bibles are being circulated. What numbers of sermons on the Bible are being preached. What numbers of Bibles are being read in home and school. How little blessing when it comes "in word" only; what Divine blessing and power when it comes "in the Holy Ghost," when it is preached "with the Holy Ghost sent forth from Heaven." Pray for Bible circulation, and preaching and teaching and reading, that it may all be in the Holy Ghost, with much prayer. Pray for the power of the Spirit with the Word in your own neighborhood, wherever it is being read or heard. Let every mention of "The Word of God" waken intercession.

How to Pray - Watching and Praying

Continue steadfastly in prayer watching therein with thanksgiving; withal praying for us also, that God may open unto us a door for the Word. -Col. 4:2, 3.

Do you not see how all depends upon God and prayer? As long as He lives and loves, and hears and works, as long as there are souls with hearts closed to the Word, as long as there is work to be done in carrying the Word - Pray without ceasing. Continue steadfastly in prayer, watching therein with thanksgiving. These words are for every Christian.

Special Petitions

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

by Andrew Murray

THIRTY-FIRST DAY

What to Pray - For the Spirit of Christ in His people

I am the Vine, ye are the branches. -John 15:5.

That ye should do as I have done to you. -John 13:15.

As branches we are to be so like the Vine, so entirely identified with it, that all may see that we have the same nature, and life, and Spirit. When we pray for the Spirit, let us not only think of a Spirit of power, but the very disposition and temper of Christ Jesus. Ask and expect nothing less: for yourself, and all God's children, cry for it.

How to Pray - Striving in Prayer

That ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me. -Rom. 15:30.

I would ye knew what great conflict I have for you. -Col. 2:1.

All the powers of evil seek to hinder us in prayer. Prayer is a conflict with opposing forces. It needs the whole heart and all our strength. May God give us grace to strive in prayer till we prevail.

Special Petitions

The End.

The Power of the Blood

by Andrew Murray

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The Power of the Blood

by Andrew Murray

CHAPTER 1

What the Scriptures Teach About the Blood

"Not Without Blood"-Heb. ix. 7 and 18.

GOD has spoken to us in the Scriptures in divers portions and in divers manners; but the VOICE is ever the same, it is always the WORD of the same GOD.

Hence the importance of treating the Bible as a whole, and receiving the witness it gives in its various portions, concerning certain definite truths. It is thus we learn to recognise the place these truths actually occupy in Revelation, or rather in the HEART OF GOD. Thus, too, we begin to discover what the foundation truths of the Bible are, which above others demand attention. Standing as they do, so prominently, in each new departure in God's revelation; remaining unchanged when the Dispensation changes, they carry a divine intimation of their importance.

It is my object, in the chapters which follow this introductory one, to show what the Scriptures teach us concerning THE GLORIOUS POWER OF THE BLOOD OF JESUS, and the wonderful blessings procured for us by it; and I cannot lay a better foundation for my exposition, nor give a better proof of the superlative glory of THAT BLOOD AS THE POWER OF REDEMPTION, than by asking my, readers to follow me through the Bible, and thus see the unique place which is given to THE BLOOD from the beginning to the end of God's revelation of Himself to man, as recorded in the Bible.

It will become clear that there is no single scriptural idea, from Genesis to Revelation, more constantly and more prominently kept in view, than that expressed by the words-"THE BLOOD."

Our inquiry then is what the Scriptures teach us about THE BLOOD.

FIRST, IN THE OLD TESTAMENT;

SECONDLY, IN THE TEACHING OF OUR LORD JESUS HIMSELF;

THIRDLY, IN WHAT THE APOSTLES TEACH; and

LASTLY, WHAT ST. JOHN TELLS US OF IT IN REVELATION.

I. LET US LEARN WHAT THE OLD TESTAMENT TEACHES. Its record about THE BLOOD begins at the gates of Eden.

Into the unrevealed mysteries of Eden I do not enter.

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

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Chapter 31 Perfect Love: Casting Out Fear.

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Be Perfect

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PREFACE and PRAYER

If any one takes up this little volume with the idea of finding a theory of Perfection expounded or vindicated, he will be disappointed. My object has been a very different one. What I have wished to do is to go with my reader through the Word of God, noting the principal passages in which the word "Perfect" occurs, and seeking in each case from the context to find what the impression is the word was meant to convey. It is only when we have yielded ourselves simply and prayerfully to allow the words of Scripture to have their full force, that we are on the right track for combining the different aspects of truth into one harmonious whole.

Among the thoughts which have specially been brought home to me in these meditations, and in which I trust I may secure the assent of my reader, the following are the chief:

1. There is a Perfection of which Scripture speaks as possible and attainable. There may be, there is, great diversity of opinion as to how the term is to be defined. But there can be only one opinion as to the fact that God asks and expects His children to be perfect with Him; that He promises it as His own work; and that Scripture speaks of some as having been perfect before Him, and having served Him with a perfect heart. Scripture speaks of a Perfection that is at once our duty and our hope.

2. To know what this Perfection is we must begin by accepting the command, and obeying it with our whole heart. Our natural tendency is the very opposite. We want to discuss and define what Perfection is, to understand how the command can be reconciled with our assured conviction that no man is perfect, to provide for all the dangers we are sure are to be found in the path of Perfection.

This is not God's way. Jesus said, "If any man will do, he will know." The same principle holds good in all human attainment. It is only he who has accepted the command, "Be perfect," in adoring submission and obedience, who can hope to know what the Perfection is that God asks and gives. Until the Church is seen prostrate before God, seeking this blessing as her highest good, it will be no wonder if the very word "Perfection," instead of being an attraction and a joy, is a cause of apprehension and anxiety, of division and offence. May God increase the number of those who, in childlike humility, take the word from His own lips, as a living seed, in the assurance that it will bring forth much fruit.

3. Perfection is no arbitrary demand; in the very nature of things God can ask nothing less. And this is true whether we think of Him or of ourselves.

If we think of Him, who as God has created the universe for Himself and for His glory, who seeks

and alone is able to fill it with His happiness and love, we see how impossible it is for God to allow anything else to share man's heart with Himself. God must be all and have all. As Lawgiver and Judge; He dare not be content with anything less than absolute legal perfection. As Redeemer and Father it equally becomes Him to claim nothing less than a real childlike perfection. God must have it all.

If we think of ourselves, the call to perfection is no less imperative. God is such an Infinite, Spiritual Good, and the soul is so incapable of receiving or knowing or enjoying Him except as it gives itself wholly to Him, that for our own sakes God's love can demand of us nothing less than a perfect heart.

4. Perfection, as the highest aim of what God in His great power would do for us, is something so Divine, Spiritual, and Heavenly, that it is only the soul that yields itself very tenderly to the leading of the Holy Spirit that can hope to know its blessedness.

God has worked into every human heart a deep desire for perfection. That desire is manifested in the admiration which all men have for excellence in the different objects or pursuits to which they attach value. In the believer who yields himself wholly to God, this desire fastens itself upon God's wonderful promises, and inspires a prayer like that of M'Cheyne: "Lord, make me as holy as a pardoned sinner can be made."

The more we learn to desire this full conformity to God's will, for the consciousness that we are always pleasing to Him, we will see that all this must come as a gift direct from heaven. This gift is the full outbirth in us of the life of God, the inbreathing of the Holy Spirit of Jesus in those who are wholly yielded to His indwelling and rule. Trusting ever less to men's thoughts and teachings, we will retire often into the secret of God's presence, in the assurance that the more we see God's face, and hear the secret voice that comes direct from Him, "BE PERFECT," the more will the Holy Spirit dwelling within us unfold the heavenly fulness and power of the words, and make them, as God's words, bring and give and create the very thing He speaks.

In the hope that these simple meditations may help some of God's children to go on to Perfection, I commit them and myself to the Blessed Father's teaching and keeping.

ANDREW MURRAY.

Ever BLESSED FATHER! You have sent me a message by Your Beloved Son that I am to be perfect as You are perfect. Coming from You, O You incomprehensible and most glorious God, it means more than man can grasp. Coming to You, I ask that You will Yourself teach me what it means, create in me what it claims, give me what it promises.

My Father! I accept the word in the obedience of faith. I will yield my life to its rule. I will hide it in my heart as a living seed, in the assurance that there, deeper than thought or feeling, Your Holy Spirit can make it strike root and grow up.

And as I go through Your Word, to meditate on what it says of the path of the perfect, teach me, O my Father, to bring every thought of mine captive to the obedience of Christ, and to wait for that teaching of Your Holy Spirit which is so sure to the upright in heart. In Him, with whom You have sent me the message, give me the answer to this prayer also. Amen.

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 1 -- A PERFECT HEART MAKES A PERFECT MAN.

> "Noah was a righteous man, and perfect in his generation, and Noah walked with God." Gen. 6:9.
>
> "And the Lord said unto Satan, Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that fears God and shuns evil?" Job 1: 8.
>
> "The heart of David was perfect with the Lord his God." 1Kings 11: 4, 15: 3.
>
> "Asa's heart was perfect with the Lord all his days." 1 Kings 15: 14.

We have grouped together four men, of all of whom Holy Scripture testifies that they were perfect men, or that their heart was perfect with God. Of each of them Scripture testifies, too, that they were not perfect in the sense of absolute sinlessness. We know how Noah fell. We know how Job had to humble himself before God. We know how sadly David sinned. And of Asa we read that there came a time when he did foolishly, and relied on the Syrians and not on the Lord his God; when in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians. And yet the heart of these men was perfect with the Lord their God.

To understand this, there is one thing we must remember. The meaning of the word "perfect" must in each case be decided by that particular stage in God's education of His people in which it is used. What a father or a teacher counts perfection in a child of ten, is very different from what he would call so in one of twenty. As to the disposition or spirit, the perfection would be the same; in its contents, as the proofs by which it was to be judged of, there would be a wide difference. We shall see later on how in the Old Testament nothing was really made perfect; how Christ has come to reveal, and work out, and impart the true perfection; how the perfection, as revealed in the New Testament, is something infinitely higher, more spiritual and efficacious, than under the old economy. And yet at root they are one. God looks at the heart. A heart that is perfect with Him is an object of complacency and approval. A wholehearted consecration to His will and fellowship, a life that takes as its motto, WHOLLY FOR GOD, has in all ages, even where the Spirit had not yet been given to dwell in the heart, been accepted by Him as the mark of the perfect man.

The lesson which these Scripture testimonies suggest to us is a very simple, but a very searching one. In God's record of the lives of His servants there are some of whom it is written: his heart was perfect with the Lord his God. Is this, let each reader ask, what God sees and says of me? Does my life, in the sight of God, bear the mark of intense, wholehearted consecration to God's will and service? of a burning desire to be as perfect as it is possible for grace to make me? Let us yield ourselves to the searching light of this question. Let us believe that with this word PERFECT, God

means something very real and true. Let us not evade its force, or hide ourselves from its condemning power, by the vain subterfuge that we do not fully know what it means. We must first accept it, and give up our lives to it, before we can understand it. It cannot be insisted upon too strongly that, whether in the Church at large and its teaching, or in the life of the individual believer, there can be no hope of comprehending what perfection is except as we count all things loss to be apprehended of it, to live for it, to accept of it, to possess it.

But so much we can understand. What I do with a perfect heart I do with love and delight, with a willing mind and all my strength. It implies a fixity of purpose, and a concentration of effort, that makes everything subordinate to the one object of my choice. This is what God asks, what His saints have given, what we must give.

Again I say to every one who wishes to join me in following through the Word of God its revelation of His will concerning perfection, yield yourself to the searching question: Can God say of me as of Noah and Job, of David and Asa, that my heart is perfect with the Lord my God? Have I given myself up to say that there must be nothing, nothing whatever, to share my heart with God and His will? Is a heart perfect with the Lord my God the object of my desire, my prayer, my faith, my hope? Whether it has been so or not, let it be so today. Make the promise of God's word your own: "The God of peace Himself perfect you." The God, who is of power to do above all we ask or think, will open up to you the blessed prospect of a life of which He shall say: "His heart was perfect with the Lord his God."

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 2 -- WALK BEFORE ME, AND BE PERFECT.

> "And when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him, I am Almighty God: walk before Me, and be perfect. And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him." Gen. 17: 1-3.
>
> "You shall be perfect with the Lord your God." Deut. 18: 13.
>
> "Let your heart be perfect with the Lord your God to walk in His statutes." 1 Kings 8: 61.

It was now twenty-four years since God had called Abram to go out from his father's home, and that he had obeyed. All that time he had been a learner in the school of faith. The time was approaching for him to inherit the promise, and God comes to establish His covenant with him. In view of this, God meets him with this threefold word: I am Almighty God: walk before Me: be perfect.

Be perfect. The connection in which we find the word will help us to understand its meaning. God reveals Himself as God Almighty. Abram's faith had long been tried: it was about to achieve one of its greatest triumphs: faith was to be changed to vision in the birth of Isaac. God invites Abram more than ever to remember, and to rest upon, His omnipotence. He is Almighty God: all things are possible to Him: He holds rule over all. All His power is working for those who trust Him. And all He asks of His servant is that he be perfect with Him: give Him his whole heart, his perfect confidence. God Almighty with all His power is wholly for you; be wholly for God. The knowledge and faith of what God is lies at the root of what we are to be: "I am Almighty God: be perfect." As I know Him whose power fills heaven and earth, I see that this is the one thing needed: to be perfect with Him, wholly and entirely given up to Him. WHOLLY FOR GOD is the keynote of perfection.

Walk before Me, and be perfect. It is in the life fellowship with God, in His realized presence and favor, that it becomes possible to be perfect with Him. Walk before Me Abraham had been doing this; God's word calls him to a clearer and more conscious apprehension of this as his life calling. It is easy for us to study what Scripture says of perfection, to form our ideas of it, and argue for them. But let us remember that it is only as we are walking closely with God, seeking and in some measure attaining, uninterrupted communion with Him, that the Divine command will come to us in its Divine Power, and unfold to us its Divine meaning. Walk before Me, and be perfect. God's realized presence is the school, is the secret, of perfection. It is only he who studies what perfection is in the full light of God's presence to whom its hidden glory will be opened up.

That realized presence is the great blessing of the redemption in Jesus Christ. The veil has been rent, the way into the true sanctuary, the Presence of God, has been opened; we have access with boldness into the Holiest of all. God, who has proved Himself God Almighty in raising Jesus from the dead and setting Him, and us in Him, at His right hand, speaks now to us: I am God Almighty: walk before Me, and be perfect.

That command came not only to Abraham. Moses gave it to the whole people of Israel; "You shall be perfect with the Lord your God." It is for all Abraham's children; for all the Israel of God; for every believer. Oh! think not that ere you can obey you must first understand and define what perfection means. No, God's way is the very opposite of this. Abraham went out, not knowing where he went. You are called to go on to perfection: go out, not knowing where you are going. It is a land God will show you. Let your heart be filled with His glory: I am God Almighty. Let your life be spent in His presence: walk before Me. As His Power and His Presence rest upon you and fill you, your heart will, before you know, be drawn up, and strengthened to accept and rejoice in and fulfil the command: be perfect. As surely as the opening bud has but to abide in the light of the sun to attain perfection, will the soul that walks in the light of God be perfect too. As the God, who is ALL, shines upon it, it cannot but rejoice to give Him ALL.

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 3 -- PERFECT WITH THE LORD YOUR GOD

"You shall be perfect with the Lord your God." Deut. 18: 13.

To be perfect before God is not only the calling and the privilege of a man like Abraham, it is equally the duty of all his children. The command is given to all Israel, for each man of God's people to receive and obey: "You shall be perfect with the Lord your God." It comes to each child of God; no one professing to be a Christian may turn aside from it, or refuse it obedience, without endangering his salvation. It is not a command like, "You shall not kill," or, "You shall not steal," having reference to a limited sphere in our life, but is a principle that lies at the very root of all true religion. If our service of God is to be acceptable, it must not be with a divided, but a whole, a perfect heart.

The chief hindrance in the way of obedience to this command lies in our misapprehension of what religion is. Man was created simply to live for God, to show forth His glory, by allowing God to show how completely He could reveal His likeness and blessedness in man. God lives for man; longing in the greatness of His love to communicate His goodness and His love. It was to this life, lost by sin, Christ came to redeem us back. The selfishness of the human heart looks upon salvation as simply the escape from hell, with so much of holiness as is needed to make our happiness secure. Christ meant us to be restored to the state from which we had fallen -- the whole heart, the whole will, the whole life given up to the glory and service of God. To be wholly given up to God, to be perfect with the Lord our God, lies at the very root, is the very essence of true religion. The enthusiastic devotion of the whole heart to God is what is asked of us.

When once this misconception has been removed, and the truth begins to dawn upon the soul, a second hindrance is generally met with in the question of unbelief, How can these things be? Instead of first accepting God's command,and then waiting in the path of obedience for the teaching of the Spirit, men are at once ready with their own interpretation of the word, and confidently affirm, "it cannot be." They forget that the whole object of the gospel and the glory of Christ's redemption is, that it makes possible what is beyond man's thoughts or powers; and that it reveals God, not as a Lawgiver and Judge, exacting the last penny, but as a Father, who in grace deals with each one according to his capacity, and accepts the devotion and the intention of the heart.

We understand this of an earthly father. A child of ten is doing some little service for the father, or helping him in his work. The work of the child is very defective, and yet the cause of joy and hope to the father, because he sees in it the proof of the child's attachment and obedience, as well as the pledge of what that spirit will do for the child when his intelligence and his strength have been increased. The child has served the father with a perfect heart, though the perfect heart does not at once imply perfect work. Even so the Father in heaven accepts as a perfect heart the simple

childlike purpose that makes His fear and service its one object. The Christian may be deeply humbled at the involuntary uprisings of the evil nature; but God's Spirit teaches him to say, "It is no more I, but sin that dwells in me." He may be sorely grieved by the consciousness of shortcoming and failure,but he hears the voice of Jesus, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Even as Christ counted the love and obedience of His faithless disciples as such, and accepted it as the condition on which He had promised them the Spirit, the Christian can receive the witness of the Spirit that the Father sees and accepts in him the perfect heart, even where there is not yet the perfect performance.

"You shall be perfect with the Lord your God." Oh! let us beware of making the Word of God of no effect by our traditions. Let us believe the message, "You are not under the law, but under grace." Let us realize what grace is in its pitying tenderness: "As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him." And what, in its mighty power working in us both to will and to do: "The God of all grace shall Himself perfect you." If we hold fast our integrity, our confidence, and the rejoicing of hope steadfast unto the end, being perfect in heart will lead us on to be perfect in the way, and we will realize that Christ fulfils this too in us, "You shall be perfect with the Lord your God."

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 4 -- I HAVE WALKED BEFORE YOU WITH A PERFECT HEART.

> "Then Hezekiah prayed unto the Lord, saying, 'I beg You, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before You in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in Your sight.' And the word of the Lord came to Isaiah, saying, 'Tell Hezekiah, this is what the Lord says, I have heard your prayer, and seen your tears; I will heal you.'" 2Kings 20: 2-5.

What a childlike simplicity of communication with God. When the Son was about to die, He spoke, "I have glorified You on earth, I have finished the work which You gave Me to do. And now, O Father, You glorify Me." He pleaded His life and work as the ground for expecting an answer to His prayer. And so Hezekiah, the servant of God, also pleaded, not as a matter of merit, but in the confidence that "God is not unrighteous to forget our work of faith and labor of love," that God should remember how he had walked before Him with a perfect heart.

The words first of all suggest to us this thought, that the man who walks before God with a perfect heart can know it -- it may be a matter of consciousness. Let us look at the testimony Scripture gives of him (2 Kings 18: 3-6), "He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father did." Then follow the different elements of this life that was right in God's sight. "He trusted in the Lord God of Israel. He held to the Lord. He departed not from following Him. He kept His commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses. And the Lord was with Him." His life was one of trust and love, of steadfastness and obedience. And the Lord was with him. He was one of the saints of whom we read, "By faith they obtained a good report." They had the witness that they were righteous, that they were pleasing to God.

Let us seek to have this blessed consciousness. Paul had it when he wrote, "Our glorying is, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom, but in the grace of God, we behaved ourselves" (2 Cor. 1: 12). John had it when he said, "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, we have boldness toward God; and whatever we ask we receive, because we keep His commandments, and do the things that are pleasing in His sight" (1 John 3: 21, 22). If we are to have perfect peace and confidence, if we are to walk in the holy boldness and the blessed glorying of which Scripture speaks, we must know that our heart is perfect with God.

Hezekiah's prayer suggests a second lesson -- that the consciousness of a perfect heart gives wonderful power in prayer. Read over again the words of his prayer, and notice how distinctly this walk with a perfect heart is his plea. Read over again the words just quoted from John, and see how clearly he says that "because we keep His commandments we receive what we ask." It is a heart that does not condemn us, that knows that it is perfect toward God, that gives us boldness.

There is most probably not a single reader of these lines who cannot testify how painfully at some

time or other the consciousness of the heart not being perfect with God has hindered confidence and prayer. And mistaken views as to what the perfect heart means, and as to the danger of self-righteousness in praying Hezekiah's prayer, have in very many cases banished all idea of its ever being possible to attain to that boldness and confident assurance of an answer to prayer which John connects with a heart that does not condemn us. Oh! that we would give up all our prejudices, and learn to take God's Word as it stands as the only rule of our faith, the only measure of our expectations. Our daily prayers would be a new reminder that God asks the perfect heart; a new occasion of childlike confession as to our walking or not walking with a perfect heart before God; a new motive to make nothing less the standard of our intercourse with our Father in heaven. How our boldness in God's presence would be ever clearer; how our consciousness of His acceptance would be brighter; how the humbling thought of our nothingness would be quickened, and our assurance of His strength in our weakness, and His answer to our prayer, become the joy of our life.

Oh! the comfort, amid all consciousness of imperfection of attainment, of being able to say, in childlike simplicity, "Remember, O Lord, how I have walked before You with a perfect heart."

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 5 – LORD, GIVE A PERFECT HEART.

> "Give to Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep Your commandments, Your testimonies, and Your statutes." 1Chron. 29: 19.
>
> "Let my heart be perfect in Your testimonies." Ps. 119: 80.

In his parting commission to Solomon, David had laid it upon him to serve God with a perfect heart, because He is God who searches the hearts. It is nothing less than the heart, the whole heart, a perfect heart, that God wants. Very shortly afterwards, in his dedication prayer after the giving of all the material for the temple, he turns again to this as the one thing needful, and asks it for his son as a gift from God. "Give my son Solomon a perfect heart." The perfect heart is a gift from God, given and received under the laws which rule all His giving, as a hidden seed to be accepted and acted on in faith. The command, "Be perfect," comes and claims immediate and full submission. Where this submission is yielded, the need of a Divine power to make the heart fit for perfection becomes the motive for urgent and earnest prayer. The word of command, received and hid in a good. and honest heart, becomes itself the seed of a Divine power. God works His grace in us by stirring us to work. So the desire to listen to God's command, and to serve Him with a perfect heart, is a beginning that God looks to, and that He will Himself strengthen and perfect. The gift of a perfect heart is thus obtained in the way of the obedience of faith. Begin at once to serve God with a perfect heart, and the perfect heart will be given to you.

The perfect heart is a gift from God, to be asked for, to be obtained by prayer. No one will pray for it earnestly, perseveringly, believingly, until he accepts God's word fully that it is a positive command and an immediate duty to be perfect. Where this has been done, the consciousness will soon grow strong of the utter impossibility of attempting obedience in human strength. And the faith will grow that the word of command was simply meant to draw the soul to Him who gives what He asks.

The perfect heart is a gift to be obtained in prayer. David asked the Lord to give it to his son Solomon, even as he had prayed for himself long before, "Let my heart be perfect in Your testimonies." Let all of us who desire for this blessing follow his example: let us make it a matter of definite, earnest prayer. Let each son and daughter of God say to the Father: "Give Your child a perfect heart." Let us in the course of our meditations in this little book turn each word of command, or teaching, or promise into prayer -- pointed, personal prayer that asks and claims, that accepts and proves the gift of a perfect heart. And when the seed begins to strike root, and the spirit gives the consciousness that the first beginnings of the perfect heart have been bestowed in the wholehearted purpose to live for God alone, let us hold on in prayer for the perfect heart in all its completeness. A heart perfect in its purpose towards God -- this is only the initial stage. Then there comes the putting on of one grace after another -- the going, from strength to strength, on to

perfection -- the putting on, in ever-growing distinctness of likeness, the Lord Jesus, with every trait of His holy image. All this is to be sought and found in prayer too. It is just he who knows most of what it is to be perfect in purpose who will pray most to be perfect in practice too.

In the words of Hezekiah, we see that there are two elements in the perfect heart: the relation to God, and to His commandments. "I have walked before You with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in Your sight." David speaks of the second of these in his prayer, "a perfect heart to keep Your commandments." The two always go together: walking before God, in the awareness of His presence, will ensure walking in His commandments.

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes from the Father of lights," the gift of a perfect heart too. "But let us ask in faith, nothing wavering." Let us be sure that in the believing, adoring worship of God there will be given to the soul that is set upon having it, nothing less than what God Himself means with a perfect heart. Let us pray the prayer boldly, "Lord, give Your child a perfect heart. Let my heart be perfect in Your testimonies."

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 6 – GOD'S STRENGTH FOR THE PERFECT IN HEART.

> "Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host? Yet, because you relied on the Lord, He delivered them into your hand. For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him." 2 Chron. 16: 8, 9.

We have here the same three thoughts we had in God's words to Abraham. There, it was the command to be perfect in connection with the faith in God's power and a walk in His Presence. Here, we have the perfect heart spoken of as the condition of the experience of God's power, and as that which His eyes seek and approve in those who walk in His presence. The words teach us the great lesson of the value of the perfect heart in His sight. It is the one thing He desires. "His eyes run to and fro through the whole earth" to find such. The Father seeks such to worship Him. And when He finds them, then He shows Himself strong in their behalf. It is the one thing that marks the soul as having the capacity of receiving, and showing God's glory, His strength.

The context proves that the chief mark of the perfect heart is trust in God. "Because you relied on the Lord, He delivered them into your hand. For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro to show Himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him." The essence of faith is this, that it gives God His place and glory as God; it allows Him free scope to work, relying on Him alone; it lets God be God. In such faith or reliance the heart proves itself perfect toward God; with no other object of confidence or desire, it depends upon none but Him. As the eyes of God go to and fro throughout the world, wherever He discovers such a man, He delights to prove Himself strong to him, to work for him or in him, as the case may be, according to the riches of the glory of His power.

What precious lessons these words teach us for the Christian's life. To have God reveal His strength in us, to have Him make us strong for life or work, for doing or for suffering, our heart must be perfect with Him. Let us not shrink from accepting the truth. Let no preconceived opinion as to the impossibility of perfection keep us from allowing the Word of God to have its fulleffect upon us. He shows Himself strong to those whose heart is perfect towards Him. Before we attempt to define exactly, let us first receive the truth that there is such a thing as what God calls a perfect heart, and say it shall be ours. Let us rest contented with nothing short of knowing that the eyes of the Lord have seen that we are wholehearted with Him. Let us not be afraid to say, "With my whole heart, I have sought Thee."

We saw how the chief mark of this perfect heart is reliance upon God. God looks for men who trust Him fully; in them He will show His power. God is a Being of Infinite and Incomprehensible Glory and Power. Our mind can form no right conception of what He can do for us. Even when we have His word and promises, our human thoughts of what He means are always defective. By

nothing do we dishonor God more than by limiting Him. By nothing do we limit Him more than by allowing our human ideas of what He purposes to be the measure of our expectations. The reliance of a heart perfect towards Him is simply this: it yields to Him as God, it rests upon Him, it allows Him, as God, to do in His own way what He has promised. The heart is perfect towards Him in meeting Him with a perfect faith for all that He is and does as God. Faith expects from God what is beyond all expectation.

The Father seeks such. Oh! with what joy He finds them. How He delights in them as His eyes, running to and fro throughout the world, rests upon them to show Himself their strong and mighty Helper! Let us walk before this God with a perfect heart, relying upon Him yet to work in us above all that we can ask or think. The one great need of the spiritual life is to know how entirely it is dependent upon God working in us, and what the exceeding greatness of His power is in us who believe. As the soul knows this, and with a perfect heart yields to this Almighty God to let Him do His work within, oh! how strong He will show Himself in its behalf.

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 7 -- WITH THE PERFECT GOD SHOWS HIMSELF PERFECT.

> "I was also perfect with Him, and I kept myself from my iniquity."
> "To the perfect man, You will show Yourself perfect."
> "As for God, His way is perfect."
> "He is a shield to them that trust Him."
> "It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect."
> Ps. 18: 23, 25, 30, 32.

"As for God, His way is perfect." In all He does, and all He is God is the perfection of goodness and beauty. In nature and grace, in heaven and on earth, in the greatest and the least, everything that is in God and of God, down to the very hem of His garment, is infinite perfection. If men who study and admire the perfection of His works, if saints who love and seek the perfection of His service and fellowship, but understood it, they would see that here alone perfection can be truly known and found --in God Himself. As for God -- this is the highest we can say of Him, though we can comprehend but little of it -- As for God, His way is perfect.

"He makes my way perfect." Of God's perfection this is the chief excellence -- that He does not keep it for Himself: heaven and earth are full of His glory. God is Love; who lives, not for Himself, but in the energy of an infinite life, makes His creatures, as far as they can possibly receive it, partakers of His perfection. It is His delight to perfect all around Him. And especially the soul of man that rises up to Him. Between His servant and Himself, God would have perfect harmony. The Father wants the child to be like Himself. The more I learn in adoring worship to say, "As for God, His way is perfect," the sooner I will have faith and grace with the Psalmist to say, "He makes my way perfect."

As we believe this, that is, receive the heavenly truth in these words into our inmost being and assimilate it, we shall not wonder that the same man also said, "I was also perfect with Him, and kept myself from my iniquity." "The God that arms me with strength, and makes my way perfect," His alone is the power and the honor and the glory of what He has created. This makes the confession, "I was also perfect with Him," so far from being presumption or self-righteousness, nothing but an ascription of praise to Him to whom it is due.

And then follow the words in which the perfection of God and that of man are seen in their wonderful relationship and harmony: "With the perfect man, You will show Yourself perfect." As little as there can be a ray of the light of day, however dull and clouded it be, but what speaks of the sun, so little can there be any perfection but what is of God. In its feeblest beginnings in a soul, in its darkest and almost hopeless strugglings, it is all God's perfection wrestling with man to break through and get possession. As long as man refuses to consent, God cannot make His perfection known, for God must be to us what we are to Him: "With the warped, You show

Yourself twisted." But where man's will consents, and his heart chooses this perfection and this perfect God as its portion, God meets the soul with ever larger manifestation of how perfect He is towards His own. "With the perfect man You will show Yourself perfect."

Christian! walk before God with a perfect heart, and you will experience how perfect the heart, and the love, and the will of God to bless, is towards you. Of a heart perfectly yielded to Him, God will take perfect possession. Walk before God in a perfect way -- it is God who makes my way perfect -- and your eyes and heart will be opened to see, in adoring wonder, how perfect God's way is with you and for you. Do take mightily hold of this word as the law of God's revelation of Himself: "With the perfect man, You will show Yourself perfect." To a soul perfectly devoted to Him, God will wonderfully reveal Himself. Turn with your whole heart and life, your whole trust and obedience, towards God -- walk before Him with a perfect heart -- and He will show Himself perfect to you, the God whose way is perfect and makes your way perfect, the God who perfects you in every good thing. Meet God with your, "With my whole heart I have sought You"; He will answer you with His, "Yes, I will rejoice over you to do you good, with my whole heart and with my whole soul." Oh! say it in faith, and hope, and joy, "With the perfect man You will show Yourself perfect."

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 8 -- PERFECT IN HEART LEADS TO PERFECT IN THE WAY.

> "Blessed are they that are perfect in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep His testimonies, that seek Him with the whole heart." Ps. 119: 1, 2.
>
> "Let my heart be perfect in Thy testimonies." Ps. 119: 80.
>
> "I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. Oh! when will You come to me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart." Ps. 101: 2.

We have seen what Scripture says of the perfect heart: here it speaks of the perfect walk. "Blessed are the perfect in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord." These are the opening words of the beautiful psalm, in which there is given to us the picture, from the witness of personal experience, of the wonderful blessedness of a life in the law and the will of God. As he looks back upon the past, the Psalmist does not hesitate to claim that he has kept that law: "I have kept Your testimonies;" " I have conformed to Your law;" "I did not desert Your standards ;" "I have not strayed from Your judgments;" "I have done judgment and justice;" "I have not swerved from Your testimonies;" "I have done Your commandments;" "My soul has conformed to Your declarations." Of a truth may the man who can look up to God and, in simplicity of soul, speak thus, say, "How blessed are the perfect in the way!"

What is meant by this being "perfect in the way" becomes plain as we study the psalm. Perfection includes two elements. The one is the perfection of heart, the earnestness of purpose, with which a man gives himself up to seek God and His will. The other, the perfection of obedience, in which a man seeks, not only to do some, but all the commandments of his God, and rests content with nothing less than the New Testament privilege of "standing perfect in all the will of God." Of both, the Psalmist speaks with great confidence. Hear how he testifies of the former in words such as these: "Blessed are they that seek Him with the whole heart ;" "With my whole heart I have sought You;" "With my whole heart, I will conform to Your law;" "I will keep Your standards with my whole heart;" "Your standards are my delight;" "O, how I love Your standards!" "Consider how I love Your standards;" "I love them exceedingly." This is indeed the perfect heart of which we have already heard. The whole psalm is a prayer, and an appeal to God Himself to consider and see how His servant in wholehearted simplicity has chosen God and His standard as his only portion.

We have more than once said that in this wholeheartedness, in the perfect heart, we have the root of all perfection.

But it is only the root and beginning: there is another element that may not be lacking. God is to be found in His will; he who would truly find and fully enjoy God, must meet Him in all His will.

This is not always understood. A man may have his heart intent on serving God perfectly, and yet may be unconscious how very imperfect his knowledge of God's will is. The very earnestness of his purpose, and his consciousness of integrity towards God, may deceive him. As far as he knows, he does God's will. But he forgets how much there is of that blessed will that he does not yet know. He can learn a very blessed lesson from the writer of our psalm.

Hear how he speaks: "I have refrained my feet from every evil way;" "I hate every false way;" "I esteem all Your standards concerning all things to be right." It is this surrender to a life of entire and perfect obedience that explains at once the need he felt of Divine teaching, and the confidence with which he pleaded for it and expected it: "Let my heart be perfect in Your testimonies." The soul that longs for nothing less than to be perfect in the way, and in deep consciousness of its need of a Divine teaching pleads for it, will not be disappointed.

In our next meditation we pass on to the New Testament. In the Old we have the time of preparation, the awakening of the spirit of holy expectancy, waiting God's fulfilment of His promises. In the Old the perfect heart was the receptacle, emptied and cleansed for God's filling. In the New we will find Christ perfected forevermore, perfecting us, and fitting us to walk perfect in Him. In the New the word that looks at the human side, perfect in heart, disappears, to give place to that which reveals the Divine filling that awaits the prepared vessel: Perfect Love; God's love perfected in us.

"Blessed are the perfect in the way!" We have heard the testimony of an Old Testament saint, and is it not written of New Testament times, "He that is feeble shall be as David"? Surely now, in the fulness of time, when Jesus our High Priest in the power of an endless life saves completely, and the Holy Spirit has come out of God's heaven to dwell within us and be our life, surely now there need not be one word of the psalm that is not meant to be literal truth in the mouth of every believer. Let us read it once more. Speaking it word for word before God, as its writer did, we too shall begin to sing, "Blessed are the perfect in the way, that seek Him with their whole heart."

"I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. Oh! when will You come to me! I will walk within my house with a perfect heart."

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 9 -- PERFECT AS THE FATHER.

"For this reason you will be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Matt. 5: 48.

Perfect before God, perfect with God, perfect towards God: these are the expressions we find in the Old Testament. They all indicate a relationship: the choice or purpose of the heart set upon God, the wholehearted desire to trust and obey Him. The first word of the New Testament at once lifts us to a very different level, and opens to us what Christ has brought for us. Not only perfect towards God, but perfect as God; this is the wonderful prospect it holds out to us. It reveals the infinite fulness of meaning the word perfect has in God's mind. It gives us at once the only standard we are to aim at and to judge by. It casts down all hopes of perfection as a human attainment; but awakens hope in Him who, as God, has the power, as Father has the will, to make us like Himself.

A young child may be the perfect image of his father. There may be a great difference in age, in stature, in power, and yet the resemblance may be so striking that every one notices it. And so a child of God, though infinitely less, may yet bear the image of the Father so markedly, may have such a striking likeness to his Father, that in his creaturely life he will be perfect ,as the Father is in His Divine life. This is possible. It is what Jesus here commands. It is what each one should aim at. "Perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect," must become one of the first articles of our creed, one of the guiding lights of our Christian life.

Wherein this perfection of the Father consists is evident from the context: "Love your enemies, that you may be sons of your Father which is in heaven; for He makes His sun to shine on the evil and the good: Be therefore perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect." Or as it is in Luke 6: 36: "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful." The perfection of God is His love; His will to communicate His own blessedness to all around Him. His compassion and mercy are the glory of His being. He created us in His image and after His likeness, to find our glory in a life of love and mercy and beneficence. It is in love we are to be perfect, even as our Father is perfect.

The thought that comes up at once, and that ever returns again, is this: But is it possible? And if so, how? Certainly not as a fruit of man's efforts. But the words themselves contain the answer: "perfect as your Father is perfect." It is because the little child has received his life from his father, and because the father watches over his training and development, that there can be such a striking and ever-increasing resemblance between him in his feebleness and his father in his strength. It is because the sons of God are partakers of the Divine nature, have God's life, and spirit, and love within them, that the command is reasonable, and its obedience in ever-increasing measure possible: Be perfect, as your Father is. The perfection is our Father's: we have its seed in us; He delights to give the increase. The words that first appear to cast us down in utter helplessness now become our hope and strength. Be perfect, as your Father is perfect. Claim your child's heritage;

give up yourself to be wholly a son of God; yield yourself to the Father to do in you all He is able.

And then, remember too, who it is gives this message from the Father. It is the Son, who Himself was, by the Father, perfected through suffering; who learned obedience and was made perfect; and who has perfected us forever. The message, "Be perfect," comes to us from Him, our elder Brother, as a promise of infinite hope. What Jesus asks of us, the Father gives. What Jesus speaks, He does. To "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus," is the one aim of Christ and His gospel. Let us accept the command from Him; in yielding ourselves to obey it, let us yield ourselves to Him: let our expectation be from Him in whom we have been perfected. Through faith in Him we receive the Holy Ghost, by whom the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. Through faith in Him, that love becomes in us a fountain of love springing up without ceasing. In union with Him, the love of God is perfected in us, and we are perfected in love. Let us not fear to accept and obey the command, "Be perfect, as your Father is perfect."

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 10 -- PERFECTED AS THE MASTER.

> "Be therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful . . . . The disciple is not above his master: but every one who is perfected will be as his master." Lk. 6: 36, 40.

In his report of part of the Sermon on the Mount, Luke records that Jesus says, not: "Be perfect," but, "Be merciful," as your Father is. He then introduces the word perfect immediately after; not, however, in connection with the Father, but the Son, as the Master of His disciples. The change is most instructive; it leads us to look to Jesus, as He dwelt in the flesh, as our model. It might be said that our circumstances and powers are so different from those of God that it is impossible to apply the standard of His infinite perfection in our little world. But here comes the Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, tempted in all things like as we are, and offers Himself as our Master and Leader. He lives with us that we may live with Him; He lives like us that we may live like Him.

The Divine standard is embodied and made visible, is brought within our reach, in the human model. Growing into His likeness, who is the image of the Father, we shall bear the likeness of the Father too: becoming like Him, the firstborn among many brethren, we shall become perfect as the Father is. "The disciple is not above his Master: but every one who is perfected shall be as his Master."

"The disciple is not above his Master." The thought of the disciple being as the Master sometimes has reference to outward humiliation: like the Master he will be despised and persecuted (Matt. 10: 24, 25; John 15: 20). And sometimes to inward humility, the willingness to be a servant (Luke 22: 27; John 13: 16). Both in his external life and his inner disposition the perfected disciple knows nothing higher than to be as his Master.

To take Jesus as Master, with the distinct desire and aim to be and live and act like Him -- this is true Christianity. This is something far more than accepting Him as a Savior and Helper. Far more even than acknowledging Him as Lord and Master.

A servant may obey the commands of his master most faithfully, while he has little thought of through them rising up into the master's likeness and spirit. This alone is full discipleship, to long in everything to be as like the Master as possible, to count His life as the true expression of all that is perfect, and to aim at nothing less than the perfection of being perfect as He was. "Everyone who is perfected shall be as his Master."

The words suggest to us very distinctly that in discipleship there is more than one stage. Just as in the Old Testament it is said only of some that they served the Lord with a perfect heart, while of others we read that their heart was not perfect with the Lord (1 Kings 11: 4, 15: 3; 2 Chron. 25: 2), so even now there are great differences between disciples. Some there are to whom the thought of

aiming at the perfect likeness of the Master has never come: they only look to Christ as a Savior. And some there are whose heart indeed longs for full conformity to their Lord, "to be as the Master," but who have never understood, though they have read the words, that there is such a thing as "a perfect heart" and a life "perfected in love."

But there are those, too, to whom it has been given to accept these words in their Divine meaning and truth, and who do know in blessed experience what it is to say with Hezekiah, "I have walked before Thee with a perfect heart," and with John, "as He is, even so are we in this world."

As we go on in our study of what Scripture says of perfection, let us hold fast the principle we have learnt here. Likeness to Jesus in His humiliation and humility: the choice, like Him, of the form of a servant, the spirit that does not exercise lordship and would not be ministered unto, but girds itself to minister and to give its life for others, this is the secret of true perfection. "The disciple is not above his Master, but every one who is perfected shall be as his Master." With the perfect love of God as our standard, with that love revealed in Christ's humanity and humility as our model and guide, with the Holy Spirit to strengthen us with might, that this Christ may live in us, we shall learn to know what it is that every one who is perfected shall be as his Master.

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 11 -- THE PERFECT SELLING ALL TO FOLLOW CHRIST.

> "Jesus said unto him, ‘If you desire to be perfect, go sell everything, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.'" Matt. 19: 21.

To the rich young ruler poverty was to be the path to perfection. "The disciple is not above his Master, but every one who is perfected shall be as his Master." Poverty was part of the Master's perfection, part of that mysterious discipline of self-denial and suffering through which it became God to perfect Him: while He was on earth, poverty was to be the mark of all those who would be always with, and wholly as, the Master.

What does this mean? Jesus was Lord of all. He might have lived here on earth in circumstances of comfort and with moderate possessions. He might have taught us how to own, and to use, and to sanctify property. He might in this have become like us, walking in the path in which most men have to walk. But He chose poverty. Its life of self-sacrifice and direct dependence on God, its humiliation, its trials and temptations, were to be elements of that highest perfection He was to exhibit.

In the disciples whom He chose to be with Him, poverty was to be the mark of their fellowship with Him, the training school for perfect conformity to His image, the secret of power for victory over the world, for the full possession of the heavenly treasure, and the full exhibition of the heavenly spirit. And even in him, who, when the humiliation was past, had his calling from the throne, in Paul, poverty was still the chosen and much-prized vehicle of perfect fellowship with his Lord.

What does this mean? The command, "Be perfect," comes to the rich as well as the poor. Scripture has nowhere spoken of the possession of property as a sin. While it warns against the danger riches bring, and denounces their abuse, it has nowhere promulgated a law forbidding riches. And yet it speaks of poverty as having a very high place in the life of perfection.

To understand this we must remember that perfection is a relative term. We are not under a law, with its external commands as to duty and conduct, that takes no account of diversity of character or circumstance. In the perfect law of liberty in which we are called to live, there is room for infinite variety in the manifestation of our devotion to God and Christ. According to the diversity of gifts, and circumstances, and calling, the same spirit may be seen in apparently conflicting paths of life. There is a perfection which is sought in the right possession and use of earthly goods as the Master's steward; there is also a perfection which seeks even in external things to be as the Master Himself was, and in poverty to bear its witness to the reality and sufficiency of heavenly things.

In the early ages of the Church this truth, that poverty is for some the path of perfection, exercised

a mighty and a blessed influence. Men felt that poverty, as one of the traits of the holy life of Jesus and His apostles, was sacred and blessed. As the inner life of the Church grew feeble, the spiritual truth was lost in external observances, and the fellowship of the poverty of Jesus was scarce to be seen. In its protest against the self-righteousness and the superficiality of the Romish system, the Protestant Church has not yet been able to give to poverty the place it ought to have either in the portraiture of the Master's image or the disciple's study of perfect conformity to Him.

And yet it is a truth many are seeking after. If our Lord found poverty the best school for His own strengthening in the art of perfection, and the surest way to rise above the world and win men's hearts for the Unseen, it surely need not surprise us if those who feel drawn to seek the closest possible conformity to their Lord even in external things, and who long for the highest possible power in witnessing for the Invisible, should be irresistibly drawn to count this word as spoken to them too: "If you desire to be perfect, sell everything, and follow Me."

When this call is not felt, there is a larger lesson of universal application: No perfection without the sacrifice of all. To be perfected here on earth Christ gave up all: to become like Him, to be perfected as the Master, means giving up all. The world and self must be renounced. "If you desire to be perfect, sell all, and give to the poor; and come, follow Me."

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 12 -- THE PERFECT MAN A SPIRITUAL MAN.

> "Howbeit we speak wisdom among the perfect." 1 Cor: 2: 6.
>
> "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual, but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. For whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are you not yet carnal?" 1 Cor. 3: 1, 3.

Among the Corinthians there were mighty and abundant operations of the Holy Spirit. Paul could say to them (1: 5), "In everything you were enriched in Christ, so that you come behind in no gift." And yet in the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit there was much that was wanting. He had to say, "There are contentions among you; I beseech you that there be no divisions among you, but that you may be perfected together in the same mind." The spirit of humility, and gentleness, and unity was wanting; without these they could not be perfected, either individually or as a body. They needed the injunction, "Above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness."

The Corinthians were as yet carnal; the gifts of the Spirit were among them in power; but His grace, renewing, sweetening, sanctifying every temper into the likeness of Jesus, in this they were lacking much. The wisdom Paul preached was a heavenly, spiritual wisdom, God's wisdom in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which needed a spiritual, heavenly mind to apprehend it. "We speak wisdom among the perfect ;" he could not speak to them "as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal." Spiritual things must be spiritually discerned; the wisdom among the perfect could only be received by those who were not carnal, but spiritual. The perfect of whom Paul speaks are the spiritual.

And who are the spiritual? Those in whom not only the gifts, but the graces of the Spirit have obtained supremacy and are made manifest. God's love is His perfection (Matt. 5: 40-46); Christ's humility is His perfection. The self-sacrificing love of Christ, His humility, and meekness, and gentleness, manifested in daily life, are the most perfect fruit of the Spirit, the true proof that a man is spiritual. A man may have great zeal in God's service, he may be used to influence many for good, and yet, when weighed in the balance of love, be found sadly wanting. In the heat of controversy, or under unjust criticism, haste of temper, slowness to forgive and forget, quick words and sharp judgments, often reveal an easily wounded sensitiveness, which proves how little the Spirit of Christ has full possession or real mastery. The spiritual man is the man who is clothed with the spirit of the suffering, crucified Jesus.

And it is only the spiritual man who can understand "the wisdom among the perfect," "even the mystery which now has been manifested to the holy ones, to whom God was pleased to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you." A Christian teacher may be a man of wonderful sagacity and insight, may have the power of opening the truth, of

mightily stimulating and helping others, and may yet have so much of the carnal that the deeper mystery of Christ in us remains hidden. It is only as we yield ourselves wholly to the power of God's Holy Spirit, as the question of being made free from all that is carnal, of attaining the utmost possible likeness to Jesus in His humiliation, of being filled with the Spirit, rules heart and life, that the Christian, be he scholar or teacher, can fully enter into the wisdom among the perfect.

To know the mind of God we must have the mind of Christ. And the mind of Christ is this, that He emptied and humbled Himself, and became obedient to death. This His humility was His capacity, His fitness for rising to the throne of God. This mind must be in us if the hidden wisdom of God is to be revealed to us in its power. It is this that is the mark of the spiritual, the perfect man.

May God increase the number of the perfect. And to that end the number of those who know to speak wisdom among the perfect, even God's wisdom in a mystery. As the distinction between the carnal and the spiritual, the babes and the perfect, comes to recognition in the Church, the connection between a spiritual life and spiritual insight will become clearer, and the call to perfection will gain new force and meaning. And it will once again be counted just cause of reproof and of shame not to be among the perfect.

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 13 -- PERFECTING HOLINESS.

> "Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Cor. 7: 1.

These words give us an insight into one of the chief aspects of perfection, and an answer to the question: Wherein is it we are to be perfect? We must be perfect in holiness. We must be perfectly holy. Such is the exposition of the Father's message, Be perfect.

We know what holiness is. God alone is holy, and holiness is that which God communicates of Himself. Separation and cleansing and consecration are not holiness, but only the preliminary steps on the way to it. The temple was holy because God dwelt in it. Not that which is given to God is holy, but that which God accepts and appropriates, that which He takes possession of, takes up into His own fellowship and use -- that is holy. "I am the Lord who makes you holy," was God's promise to His people of old, on which the command was based, "Be holy." God's taking them for His own made them a holy people; their entering into this holiness of God, yielding themselves to His will, and fellowship, and service, was what the command, "Be holy," called them to.

Even so it is with us Christians. We are made holy in Christ; we are saints or holy ones. The call comes to us to follow after holiness, to perfect holiness, to yield ourselves to the God who is ready to sanctify us wholly. It is the knowledge of what God has done in making us His holy ones, and has promised to do in sanctifying us wholly, that will give us courage to perfect holiness.

"Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us perfect holiness." Which promises? They had just been mentioned: "I will dwell in them; I will be their God; I will receive you; I will be to you a Father." It was God's accepting the temple, and dwelling there Himself, that made it holy. It is God's dwelling in us that makes us holy; that gives us not only the motive, but the courage and the power to perfect holiness, to yield ourselves for Him to possess perfectly and entirely. It is God's being a Father to us, begetting His own life, His own Son within us, forming Christ in us, until the Son and the Father make their abode in us, that will give us confidence to believe that it is possible to perfect holiness, and will reveal to us the secret of its attainment. "Having therefore these promises, beloved," that is, knowing them, living on them, claiming and obtaining them, let us "perfect holiness."

This faith is the secret power of the growth of the inner life of perfect holiness. But there are hindrances that check and prevent this growth. These must be watched against and removed. "Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." Every defilement, outward or inward, in conduct or inclination, in the physical or the spiritual life, must be cleansed and cast away. Cleansing in the blood,

cleansing by the word, cleansing by the pruning knife or the fire -- in any way or by any means -- but we must be cleansed. In the fear of the Lord every sin must be cut off and cast out; everything doubtful or defiling must be put away; soul and body and spirit must be preserved entire and blameless. Thus cleansing ourselves from all defilement we will perfect holiness: the spirit of holiness will fill God's temple with His holy presence and power.

Beloved, having these promises, let us perfect holiness. Perfectly holy! perfect in holiness let us yield ourselves to these thoughts, to these wishes, to these promises, of our God. Beginning with the perfect childlike heart, pressing on in the perfect way, clinging to a perfect Savior, living in fellowship with a God whose way and work is perfect, let us not be afraid to come to God with His own command as our prayer: Perfect holiness, O my Lord! He knows what He means by it, and we will know if we follow on to know. Lord, I am called to perfect holiness: I come to You for it; make me as perfectly holy as a redeemed sinner can be on earth.

Let this be the spirit of our daily prayer. I would walk before God with a perfect heart: perfect in Christ Jesus; in the path of perfect holiness. I would this day come as near perfection as grace can make it possible for me. "Perfecting holiness" shall, in the power of His Spirit, be my aim.

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 14 -- WE PRAY FOR YOUR PERFECTING: BE PERFECTED.

> "This we also pray for, even your perfecting. . . . Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfected, be comforted, be of the same mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you." 2 Cor. 13: 9, 11.

The word here translated "perfect" means to bring a thing into its right condition, so that it is as it should be. It is used of mending nets, restoring them to their right state, or of equipping a ship: fitting it out with all it should have. It implies thus two things: the removal of all that is still wrong; the supply of all that is still lacking.

Within two verses Paul uses the word twice. First, as the expression of the one thing which he asks of God for them, the summary of all grace and blessing: "This we pray for, even your perfecting." That you be perfectly free from all that is wrong and carnal, and that you should perfectly possess and exhibit all that God would have you be: we pray for your perfecting. Next as the summing up in a farewell word of what He would have them aim at. "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfected." And then follow three other verbs, which show how this one, which takes the lead, has reference to the Christian's daily life, and is meant to point to what is to be his daily aim and experience. "Be perfected, be comforted, be of the same mind, live in peace." Just as the comfort of the Spirit, and the unity of love, and the life of peace are, if the God of love and peace is to be with us, our duty and our privilege every hour, so, too, the being perfected. The close of the two Epistles gathers up all its teaching in this one injunction -- Farewell -- Be Perfected.

The two texts together show us what the prayer and the preaching of every minister of the gospel ought to be; what his heart, above everything, ought to be set on. We justly look upon Paul as a model whom every minister ought to copy -- let every Gospel minister copy him in this, so that his people may know as he goes in and out among them that his heart breathes heavenward for them this one wish: Your perfecting! and may feel that all his teaching has this one aim: Be perfected!

If ministers are to seek this above everything in their charge of the Church of God, they need themselves to feel deeply and to expose faithfully the low standard that prevails in the Church. Some have said that they have seen Perfectionism slay its thousands. All must admit that Imperfectionism has slain its tens of thousands. Multitudes are soothing themselves in a life of worldliness and sin with the thought that as no one is perfect, imperfection cannot be so dangerous. Numbers of true Christians are making no progress because they have never known that we can serve God with a perfect heart, that the perfect heart is the secret of a perfect way, of a work going on unto perfection. God's call to us to be perfect, to perfect holiness in His fear, to live perfect in Christ Jesus, to stand perfect in all the will of God, must be preached, until the faith begins to live again in the Church that all teaching is to be summed up in the words, and each day of our life to be spent under their inspiration: Be Perfected!

When once ministers know themselves and are known as the messengers of this God-willed perfection, they will feel the need of nothing less than the teaching of the Holy Spirit to guide men in this path. They will see and preach that religion must indeed be a surrender of all to God. Becoming as conformed to His will, living as entirely to His glory, being as perfectly devoted to His service, as grace can enable us to be, and no less, will be the only rule of duty and measure of expectation. The message, Be Perfected! will demand the whole heart, the whole life, the whole strength. As the soul learns each day to say, "Father! I desire to be perfect in heart with You today, I desire to walk before You and be perfect," the need and the meaning of abiding in Christ will be better understood, Christ Himself with His power and love will have new preciousness, and God will prove what He can do for souls, for a Church wholly given up to Him.

O you ministers of Christ, you messengers of His salvation, say to the Churches over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers: This also we pray for -- even your perfecting! Finally, brethren, Be perfected!

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 15 -- NOT PERFECTED, YET PERFECT.

> "Not that I have already obtained, or am already perfected; but I press on. . . . One thing I do, I press on towards the goal. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." Phil.3: 12-15.

In perfection there are degrees. We have perfect, more perfect, most perfect. We have perfect, waiting to be perfected. So it was with our Lord Jesus. In Hebrews we read thrice of Him that He was perfected or made perfect. Of sinful imperfection there was not the faintest shadow in Him. At each moment of His life He was perfect -- just what He should be. And yet He needed, and it became God to perfect Him through suffering and the obedience He learned in it. As He conquered temptation, and maintained His allegiance to God, and amid strong crying and tears gave up His will to God's will, His human nature was perfected, and He became High Priest, "the Son perfected forevermore." Jesus during His life on earth was perfect, but not yet perfected.

The perfected disciple shall be as his Master. What is true of Him is true, in our measure, of us too. Paul wrote to the Corinthians of speaking wisdom among the perfect, a wisdom carnal Christians could not understand. Here in our text he classes himself with the perfect, and expects and enjoins them to be of the same mind with himself. He sees no difficulty either in speaking of himself and others as perfect, or in regarding the perfect as needing to be yet further and fully perfected.

And what is now this perfection which has yet to be perfected? And who are these perfect ones? The man who has made the highest perfection his choice, and who has given his whole heart and life to attain to it, is counted by God a perfect man. "The kingdom of heaven is like a seed." Where God sees in the heart the single purpose to be all that God wills, He sees the divine seed of all perfection. And as He counts faith for righteousness, so He counts this wholehearted purpose to be perfect as incipient perfection. The man with a perfect heart is accepted by God, amid all imperfection of attainment, as a perfect man. Paul could look upon the Church and unhesitatingly say, "As many of us as be perfect, let us be thus minded."

We know how among the Corinthians he describes two classes. The one, the large majority, carnal and content to live in strife; the other, the spiritual, the perfect. In the Church of our day it is to be feared that the great majority of believers have no conception of their calling to be perfect. They have not the slightest idea that it is their duty not only to be religious, but to be as eminently religious, as full of grace and holiness, as it is possible for God to make them. Even where there is some measure of earnest purpose in the pursuit of holiness, there is such a want of faith in the earnestness of God's purpose when He speaks: "Be perfect," and in the sufficiency of His grace to meet the demand, that the appeal meets with no response. In no real sense do they understand or accept Paul's invitation: "Let us, as many as be perfect, be thus minded."

But, thank God! it is not so with all. There is an ever-increasing number who cannot forget that God means what He says when He speaks: "Be perfect," and who regard themselves as under the most solemn obligation to obey the command. The words of Christ: "Be perfect," are to them a revelation of what Christ is come to give and to work, a promise of the blessing to which His teaching and leading will bring them. They have joined the band of like-minded ones whom Paul would associate with himself; they seek God with their whole heart; they serve Him with a perfect heart; their one aim in life is to be made perfect, even as the Master.

My reader! as in the presence of God, who has said to you: "Be perfect!" and of Christ Jesus, who gave Himself that you might obey this command of your God, I charge you that you do not refuse the call of God's servant, but enrol yourself among those who accept it: "Let us, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." Fear not to take your place before God with Paul among the perfect in heart. So far will it be from causing self-complacency, that you will learn from him how the perfect has yet to be perfected, and how the one mark of the perfect is that he counts all things loss as he presses on unto the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ.

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 16 -- PERFECT, AND YET TO BE PERFECTED.

> "Not that I have already obtained, or am already perfected, but I press on. . . . One thing I do, I press on toward the goal. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded. Brethren, be ye imitators together of me." Phil. 3: 12-17.

The mark of the perfect, as set before us in Paul and all who are thus minded, is the passionate desire to be yet made perfect. This looks like a paradox. And yet what we see in our Master proves the truth of what we say: the consciousness of being perfect is in entire harmony with the readiness to sacrifice life itself for the sake of being yet made perfect. It was thus with Christ. It was thus with Paul. It will be thus with us, as we open our hearts fully and give God's words room and time to do their work. Many think that the more imperfect one is the more he will feel his need of perfection. All experience, in every department of life, teaches us the very opposite. It is those who are nearest perfection who most know their need of being yet perfected, and are most ready to make any sacrifice to attain to it. To count everything loss for perfection in practice, is the surest proof that perfection in principle has possession of the heart. The more honestly and earnestly the believer claims that he seeks God with a perfect heart, the more ready will he be with Paul to say: "Not that I have already obtained, or am already perfected."

And wherein was it now that Paul longed to be made perfect? Read the wonderful passage with care, and without prejudice or preconceived ideas, and I think you will see that he gives here no indication of its being sin or sinful imperfection from which he was seeking to be perfectly free. Whatever his writings teach elsewhere, the thought is not in his mind here. The perfected disciple is as his Master. Paul is speaking here of his life and lifework, and feels that it is not perfected until he has reached the goal and obtained the prize. To this he is pressing on. He that runs in a race may, as far as he has gone, have done everything perfectly; all may pronounce his course perfect as far as it has gone. Still it has to be perfected. The contrast is not with failure or shortcoming, but with what is as yet unfinished, and waiting for its full end. And so Paul uses expressions which all tell us how what he already had of Christ was but a part. He did know Christ, he had gained Christ, he was found in Him, he had apprehended in wonderful measure that for which Christ had apprehended him. And yet of all these things -- of knowing Christ, of gaining Him, of being found in Him, of apprehending that for which he was apprehended -- he speaks as of what he was striving after with all his might: "If by any means I may attain to the resurrection of the dead;" "I press on to the goal, unto the prize."' It is of all this he says: "Not that I am already made perfect. Let as many as are perfect be thus minded."

Paul had known Christ for many years, but he knew there were in Him riches and treasures greater than he had known yet, and nothing could satisfy him but the full and final and eternal possession of what the resurrection would bring him. For this he counted all things but loss; for this he forgot the things that were behind; for this he pressed on to the goal, unto the prize. He teaches us the

spirit of true perfection. A man who knows he is perfect with God; a man who knows he must yet be perfected; a man who knows that he has counted all things loss to attain this final perfection; such is the perfect man.

Christian, learn here the price of perfection, as well as the mark of the perfect ones. The Master gave His life to be made perfect forever. Paul did the same. It is a solemn thing to profess the pursuit of perfection. The price of the "pearl of great price" is high: all things must be counted loss. I have urged you to put down your names in the class-list of the perfect; to ask the Master to put it down and give you the blessed witness of the Spirit to a perfect heart. I urge you now, if, like Paul, you claim to be perfect, single and wholehearted in your surrender to God, to live the life of the perfect, with all things loss for Jesus as its watchword and its strength, and its one desire to possess Him wholly, to be possessed of Him, and to be made perfect even as He was.

O our Father! be pleased to open the eyes of Your children, that they may see what the perfection of heart is that You now ask of them, and what the perfection in Christ is that You desire for them to seek at any cost.

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 17 -- PERFECT IN CHRIST.

> "Christ in you, the hope of glory: whom we proclaim, admonishing every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ: whereunto I labor also, striving according to His working which works in me mightily." Col. 1: 27-29.

Perfect in Christ: in our inquiry into the teaching of the Word as to perfection, we have here a new word opening up to us the hope, giving us the assurance, of what we have seen to be our duty. It links all that we have seen of God's call and claim, with all that we know of Christ in His grace and power. Perfect in Christ: here is the open gateway into the perfect life. He to whom it is given to see fully what it means, finds through it an abundant entrance into the life of Christian perfectness.

There are three aspects in which we need to look at the truth of our being perfect in Christ. There is, first, our perfectness in Christ, as it is prepared for us in Him, our Head. As the second Adam, Christ came and wrought out a new nature for all the members of His body. This nature is His own life, perfected through suffering and obedience. In thus being perfected Himself, He perfected forever them that are sanctified. His perfection, His perfect life, is ours. And that not only judicially, or by imputation, but as an actual spiritual reality, in virtue of our real and living union with Him. Paul says in the same Epistle, "You are complete, made full in Him"; all that you are to be is already fulfilled, and so you are fulfilled in Him: circumcised in Him, buried with Him, raised with Him, quickened together with Him. All Christ's members are in Him, fulfilled in Him.

Then there is our perfection in Christ, as imparted to us by the Holy Spirit in uniting us to Him. The life which is implanted in us at the new birth, planted into the midst of a mass of sin and flesh, is a perfect life. As the seed contains in itself the whole life of the tree, so the seed of God within us is the perfect life of Christ, with its power to grow, and fill our life, and bring forth fruit to perfection.

And then there is also our perfection in Christ, as wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, appropriated by us in the obedience of faith, and made manifest in our life and conduct. As our faith grasps and feeds upon the truth in the two former aspects, and yields itself to God to have that perfect life master and pervade the whole of our daily life in its ordinary actions; perfect in Christ will become each moment a present practical reality and experience. All that the Word has taught of the perfect heart, and the perfect way, of being perfect as the Father, and perfect as the Master, shines with new meaning and with the light of a new life. Christ, the living Christ, is our Perfection; He, Himself, lives each day and hour to impart it. The measureless love of Jesus, and the power of the endless life in which His life works, become the measure of our expectation. In the life in which we now live in the flesh, with its daily duties in relationship with men and money, with care and

temptation, we are to give the proof that Perfect in Christ is no mere ideal, but in the power of Almighty God, simple and literal truth.

It is in the last of these three aspects that Paul has used the expression in our text. He speaks of admonishing every man, and teaching every man, in all wisdom, that he may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. It is to the perfectness in daily life and walk that the admonishing and teaching have reference. In principle, Christians were perfect in Christ: in practice they were to become perfect. The aim of the Gospel Ministry among believers was to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, to teach men how they might put on the Lord Jesus, have His life cover them and have His life in them.

What a task! What a hopeless task to the minister, as he looks upon the state of the Church! What a task of infinite hopefulness, if he does his work as Paul did, "Whereunto," nothing less than presenting every man perfect in Christ: "Whereunto I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily." The aim is high, but the power is Divine. Let the minister, in full purpose of heart, make Paul's aim his own: to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. He may count upon Paul's strength: "His working which works in me mightily."

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 18 -- PERFECT IN ALL THE WILL OF GOD.

> "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Jesus Christ, salutes you, always striving for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God." Col. 4: 12.

In this, as in some of the other Epistles, there is set before us the life of the believer as he lives it in heaven in Christ, and then as he lives it here on earth with men. The teaching of Scripture is intensely spiritual and supernatural, but, at the same time, intensely human and practical. This comes out very beautifully in the two expressions of our Epistle. Paul had told the Colossians what he labored for; he now tells them what another minister, Epaphras, prayed on their behalf. Paul's striving was in his labor that they might be perfect in Christ Jesus. The striving of Epaphras was in the prayer that they might be perfect in all the will of God.

First we have "Perfect in Christ Jesus." The thought is so unearthly and Divine, that its full meaning eludes our grasp. It lifts up to life in Christ and heaven. Then we have "Perfect in all the will of God." This word brings us down to earth and daily life, placing all under the rule of God's will, and calling us in every action and disposition to live in the will of God.

"That you may stand perfect in all the will of God." "The perfection of the creature consists in nothing but willing the will of the Creator." The will of God is the expression of the Divine perfection. Nature has its beauty and glory in being the expression of the Divine will. The angels have their place and bliss in heaven in doing God's will. The Son of God was perfected in learning obedience, in giving Himself up unto the will of God. His redemption has but one object, to bring man into that only place of rest and blessedness -- the will of God. The prayer of Epaphras shows how truly he had entered into the spirit of his Master. He prays for his people, that they may stand in the will of God; and that in all the will of God -- nothing in their life excepted, in which they were not in God's will. And that again, perfect in all the will of God; at each moment, with a perfect heart walking in a perfect way. Perfect in all the will of God, is ever his one thought of what ought to be asked and could be found in prayer.

Paul prayed for the Colossians, "that they might be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." These two servants of God were of one mind, that young converts must be reminded that their knowledge of God's will is very defective, that they need to pray for a Divine teaching to know that Will, and that their one aim should be to stand perfect in all that will.

Let all seekers after perfection, let all who would be like-minded with Paul, note well the lesson. In the joy of a consecration sealed by the Holy Spirit, in the consciousness of a wholehearted purpose, and of serving God with a perfectheart, the believer is often tempted to forget how much

there may be in which he does not yet see God's will. There may be grave defects in his character, serious shortcomings from the law of perfect love in his conduct, which others can observe. The consciousness of acting up to the full light of what we know to be right is a most blessed thing, one of the marks of the perfect heart. But it must ever be accompanied with the remembrance of how much there may be that has not yet been revealed to us. This sense of ignorance as to much of God's will, this conviction that there is still much in us that needs to be changed, and sanctified, and perfected, will make us very humble and tender, very watchful and hopeful in prayer. So far from interfering with our consciousness that we serve God with a perfect heart, it will give it new strength, while it cultivates that humility which is the greatest beauty of perfection. Without it, the appeal to the consciousness of our uprightness becomes superficial and dangerous, and the doctrine of perfection a stumbling-block and a snare.

Perfect in all the will of God. Let this be our unceasing aim and prayer. Striking its roots deep in the humility which comes from the conviction of how much there is yet to be revealed to us; strengthened by the consciousness that we have given ourselves to serve Him with a perfect heart; full of the glad purpose to be content with nothing less than standing perfect in all the will of God; rejoicing in the confidence of what God will do for those who are before Him perfect in Christ Jesus: let our faith claim the full blessing. God will reveal to us how perfect in Christ Jesus, and perfect in all the will of God, are one in His thought, and may be so in our experience.

Paul prayed for the Colossians "without ceasing," that they might be filled with the knowledge of God's will. Epaphras was "always striving in his prayers" for them, that they might stand perfect in all the will of God. It is by prayer, by unceasing striving in prayer, that this grace must be sought for the Church. It is before the throne, it is in the presence of God, that the life of perfection must be found and lived. It is by the operation of the mighty quickening power of God Himself, waited for and received in prayer, that believers can indeed stand perfect in all the will of God. God give us grace so to seek and so to find it.

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 19 -- CHRIST MADE PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERING.

> "It became Him to make the Leader of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Heb. 2: 10. "Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered; and having been perfected, He became, for all them that obey Him, the Author of eternal salvation." Heb. 5: 8, 9. "But the word of the oath appointeth a Son, perfected forevermore." Heb. 7: 28.

We have here three passages in which we are taught that Jesus Christ Himself, though He was the Son of God, had to be perfected. The first tells us that it was as the Leader of our salvation that He was perfected; that it was God's work to perfect Him; that there was a need-be for it; "it became God" to do it; and that it was through suffering the work was accomplished. The second, what the power of suffering to perfect was, that in it He learned obedience to God's will; and that, being thus perfected, He became the Author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him. The third, that it is as the Son perfected for evermore that He is appointed High Priest in the heavens.

The words open to us the inmost secret of Christian perfection. The Christian has no other perfection than the perfection of Christ. The deeper his insight into the character of his Lord, as having been made perfect by being brought into perfect union with God's will through suffering and obedience, the more clearly will he apprehend wherein that redemption which Christ came to bring really consists, and what the path is to its full enjoyment.

In Christ there was nothing of sinful defect or shortcoming. He was from His birth the perfect One. And yet He needed to be perfected. There was something in His human nature which needed to grow, to be strengthened and developed, and which could only thus be perfected. He had to follow on, as, step by step, the will of God opened up to Him, and in the midst of temptation and suffering to learn and prove what it was at any cost to do that will alone. It is this Christ who is our Leader and Forerunner, our High Priest and Redeemer.

And it is as this perfection of His, this being made perfect through obedience to God's will, is revealed to us, that we will know fully what the redemption is that He brings.

We learn to take Him as our example. Like Him we say, "I am come, not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me." We accept the will of God as the one thing we have to live for and to live in. In every circumstance and trial we see and bow to the will of God. We meet every providential appointment, in every ordinary duty of daily life, as God's will. We pray to be filled with the knowledge of His will, that we may enter into it in its fulness, that we may stand complete in all the will of God. Whether we suffer or obey God's will, we seek to be perfected as the Master was.

We not only take Christ as our example and law in the path of perfection, but as the promise and pledge of what we are to be. All that Christ was and did as Substitute, Representative, Head and Savior, is for us. All He does is in the power of the endless life. This perfection of His is the perfection of His life, His way of living; this life of His, perfected in obedience, is now ours. He gives us His own Spirit to breathe, to work it in us. He is the Vine; we are the branches; the very mind and disposition that was in Him on earth is communicated to us.

Yes, more; it is not only Christ in heaven who imparts to us somewhat of His Spirit; Christ Himself comes to dwell in our heart: the Christ who was made perfect through learning obedience. It is in this character that He reigns in heaven: "He became obedient unto death; therefore God highly exalted Him." It is in this character that He dwells and rules in the heart. The real character, the essential attribute of the life Christ lived on earth, and which He maintains in us, is this: a will perfect with God, and ready at any cost to be perfected in all His will. It is this character He imparts to His own: the perfection with which He was perfected in learning obedience. As those who are perfect in Christ, who are perfect of heart towards God, and are pressing on to be made perfect, let us live in the will of God, our one desire to be even as He was, to do God's will, to stand perfect in all the will of God.

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 20 -- LET US PRESS ON TO PERFECTION.

> "But solid food is for the perfect, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern goad and evil. For this reason, let us cease to speak of the first principles of Christ, and press on unto perfection." Heb. 5: 14; 6: 1.

The writer had criticized the Hebrews for being dull of hearing; for having made no progress in the Christian life; for still being as little children who needed milk. They could not bear solid food, the deeper and more spiritual teaching in regard to the heavenly state of life into which Christ had entered, and into which He gives admission to those who are ready for it. Such our writer calls the perfect, mature or full-grown men of the house of God. We must not connect the idea of mature or full-grown with time. In the Christian life it is not as in nature: a believer of three years old may be counted among the mature or perfect, while one of twenty years' standing may be but a babe, unskilled in the word of righteousness. Nor must we connect it with power of intellect or maturity of judgment. These may be found without that insight into spiritual truth, and that longing after the highest attainable perfection in character and fellowship with God, of which the writer is speaking.

We are told what the distinguishing characteristic of the perfect is: "even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil'" It is the desire after holiness, the tender conscience that longs above everything to discern good and evil, the heart that seeks only, and always, and fully to know and do the will of God, that marks the perfect. The man who has set his heart upon being holy, and in the pursuit after the highest moral and spiritual perfection exercises his senses in everything to discern good and evil, is counted the perfect man.

The Epistle has spoken of the two stages of the Christian life. It now calls upon the Hebrews to be no longer babes, no longer to remain content with the first principles, the mere elements of the doctrine of Christ. With the exhortation, "Let us press on to perfection"; it invites them to come and learn how Jesus is a Priest in the power of an endless life, who can save completely; how He is the Mediator of a better covenant, lifting us into a better life by writing the law in our heart; how the Holiest of all has been set open for us to enter in, and there to serve the living God. "Let us go on to perfection" is the landmark pointing all to that heavenly life in God's presence which can be lived even here on earth, to which the full knowledge of Jesus as our heavenly High Priest leads us.

"Let us press on to Perfection." It is not the first time we have the word in the Epistle. We read of God's perfecting Christ through suffering. Perfection is that perfect union with God's will, that blessed meekness and surrender to God's will, which the Father wrought in Christ through His suffering. We read of Christ's learning obedience, and so being made perfect. This is the true maturity or perfection, the true wisdom among the perfect, the knowing and doing God's will. We read of strong food for the perfect, who by reason of practice, have their senses exercised to

discern good and evil. Here again perfection is, even as with Christ, the disposition, the character that is formed when a man makes conformity to God's will, fellowship with God in His holiness, the one aim of His life, to which everything else, even life itself, is to be sacrificed.

It is to this that Jesus, our High Priest, and the further teaching of the Epistle, would lead us on. The knowledge of the mysteries of God, of the highest spiritual truth, cannot profit us, because we have no inward capacity for receiving them, unless our inmost life is given up to receive as ours the perfection with which Jesus was perfected. When this disposition is found, the Holy Spirit will reveal to us how Christ has perfected forever, in the power of an endless life, those who are sanctified. He has prepared a life, a disposition, with which He clothes them. And we will understand that, "Let us go on to perfection," just means this, "Let us go on to know Christ perfectly, to live entirely by His heavenly life now that He is perfected, to follow wholly His earthly life, and the path in which He reached perfection." Union with Christ in heaven will mean likeness to Christ on earth in that lamb-like meekness and humility in which He suffered, in that Son-like obedience through which He entered into glory.

Brethren, leaving the first principles, let us go on to Perfection.

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 21 -- NO PERFECTION BY THE LAW

> "Now, if there was perfection through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people had received the law), what further need that another priest should arise after the order of Melchisedek? . . . who has been made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life . . . . For there is a disannulling of a former commandment, because of its weakness and unprofitableness, for the law made nothing perfect." Heb. 7: 11-19. Gifts and sacrifices are offered, which cannot, as touching the conscience, make the worshiper perfect." Heb. 9: 9. "For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, can never make perfect them that draw nigh." Heb. 10: 1. "That apart from us they should not be made perfect." Heb. 11: 40.

Of the Epistles of the New Testament there is none in which the word "Perfect" is used so often as that to the Hebrews. There is none that will help us more to see what Christian perfection is, and the way to its attainment. The word is used thrice of our Lord Jesus, and His being made perfect Himself. Twice of our subjective perfection. Five times of the perfection of which the law was the shadow, but which could not be until Jesus came. Thrice of Christ's work in perfecting us. And once of the work of God in perfecting us. These five thoughts will each give us a subject of meditation. Of the first two we have spoken already.

A careful perusal of the verses placed above, will show that the writer thought it of great importance to make it clear that the law could perfect no person or thing. It was all the more of consequence to press this, both because of the close connection in which the law stood to the true perfection, as its promise and preparation, and of the natural tendency of the human heart to seek perfection by the law. It was not only the Hebrews who greatly needed this teaching: among Christians in our days the greatest hindrance in accepting the perfection the gospel asks and offers, is that they make the law its standard, and then our impotence to fulfil the law, the excuse for not attaining, for not even seeking it. They have never understood that the law is but a preparation for something better; and that when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part is done away.

The Law demands; the Law calls to effort; the Law means self. It puts self upon doing its utmost. But it makes nothing perfect, neither the conscience nor the worshiper. This is what Christ came to bring. The very perfection which the law could not give He does give. The Epistle tells us that He was made a Priest, not as Aaron, after the law and in connection with the service of a carnal commandment, which had to be disannulled because of its weakness and unprofitableness, but after the power of an endless life. What Christ, as Priest, has wrought and now works, is all in the power of an inward birth, of a new life, of the eternal life. What is born into me, what is as a spirit and life within me, has its own power of growth and action. Christ's being made perfect Himself through suffering and obedience; His having perfected us by that sacrifice by which He was perfected Himself; and His communication of that perfection to us, is all in the power of an

endless life. It works in us as a life power; in no other way could we become partakers of it.

Perfection is not through the law; let us listen to the blessed lesson. Let us take the warning. The law is so closely connected with perfection, was so long its only representative and forerunner, that we can hardly realize: the law makes nothing perfect. Let us take the encouragement: What the law could not do, God, sending His Son, has done. The Son, perfected for evermore, has perfected us for ever. It is in Jesus we have our perfection. It is in living union with Him, it is when He is within us, not only as a seed or a little child, but formed within us, dwelling within us, that we shall know how far He can make us perfect. It is faith that leads us in the path of perfection. It is the faith that sees, that receives, that lives in Jesus the Perfect One, that will bear us on to the perfection God would have.

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 22 -- CHRIST HAS PERFECTED US.

> "But Christ, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, through His own blood, entered once for all into the holy place." Heb. 9: 11, 12.
>
> "By one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified." Heb. 10: 14.

In Christ's work, as set before us in the Epistle to the Hebrews, there are two parts. In contrast with the worldly sanctuary, He is the minister of the true tabernacle. The Holiest of all is now open to us: Christ has opened the way through a more perfect tabernacle into the presence of God. He has prepared and opened up for us a place of perfect fellowship with God, of access, in a life of faith, which means a life in full union with Christ, into God's immediate presence.

There must be harmony between the place of worship and the worshiper. As He has prepared the perfect sanctuary, the Holiest of all, for us, He has prepared us for it too. "By one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified." For the sanctuary the sanctified ones; for the Holiest of all a holy priesthood; for the perfect tabernacle the perfected worshiper.

"By one sacrifice He has perfected forever them that are sanctified." The word perfected cannot mean here anything different from what it meant in the three passages where it has been previously used of Him (Heb. 2: 11, 5: 9, 7: 28). They all point to that which constituted the real value, the innermost nature, of His sacrifice. He was Himself perfected for our sakes, so that He might perfect us with the same perfection with which God had perfected Him. What is this perfection with which God perfected Him through suffering, in which He was perfected through obedience, in which as the Son, perfected forevermore, He was made our High Priest?

The answer is to be found in what the object was of Christ's redeeming work. The perfection of man as created consisted in this, that he had a will with power to will as God willed, and so to enter into inner union with the Divine life and holiness and glory. His fall was a turning from the will of God to do the will of self. And so this self and self-will became the source and the curse of sin. The work of Christ was to bring man back to that will of God in which alone is life and blessedness. Therefore it became God, it was proper and needful if He was to be the Leader of our salvation, that God should make Him perfect through suffering. In His own person He was to conquer sin, to develop and bring to perfection a real human life, sacrificing everything that men hold dear, willing to give up even life itself, in surrender to God's will; proving that it is the meat, the very life of man's spirit, to do God's will. This was the perfection with which Christ was perfected as our High Priest, who brings us back to God. This was the meaning and the value of His sacrifice, that "one sacrifice"' by which "He has perfected forever them that are sanctified." In the same sacrifice in which He was perfected, He perfected us. As the second Adam, He made us partakers of His own perfection. Just as Adam in his death corrupted us and our nature

forevermore, so Christ, in His death, in which He, Himself, was perfected, perfected us and our nature for evermore. He has created for us a new perfect nature, a new life. With Him we died to sin; in Him we live for God.

And how do we become partakers of this perfection with which Christ has perfected us? First of all the conscience is perfected so that we have no more conscience of sin, and enter boldly into the Holiest, the Presence of God. The consciousness of a perfect redemption possesses and fills the soul. And then, as we abide in this, God Himself perfects us in every good thing, to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ. Through Christ, the High Priest in the power of the endless life, there comes to us in a constant stream from on high, the power of the heavenly life. So that day by day we may present ourselves perfect in Christ Jesus.

A soul that seeks to dwell in the Divine perfection of which the Epistle speaks; that holds fellowship with Him who in such intense human reality was perfected through suffering and obedience; that in faith turns to Him who has perfected us, and now holds our perfection in Himself to be communicated as a life in us day by day, for us to practice and put it into exercise in walking in His footsteps; may count most surely that He Himself will lead it into the promised inheritance.

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 23 -- GOD PERFECT YOU IN EVERY GOOD THING.

> "Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the Great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen." Heb. 13: 20, 21.

These two verses contain a summary of the whole Epistle in the form of a prayer. In the former of the two we have the substance of what was taught in the first or doctrinal half -- what God has done for us in the redemption in Christ Jesus. In the second of the two verses we have a revelation and a promise of what this God of redemption will do for us; we see how God's one aim and desire is to make us perfect. We have said before, the word "perfect" here implies the removal of all that is wrong, and the supply of all that is lacking. This is what God waits to do in us. "God make you perfect in every good thing."

We need a large faith to claim this promise. So that our faith may be full and strong, we are reminded of what God has done for us; this is the assurance of what He will yet do in us. Let us look to Him as the God of peace, who has made peace in the entire putting away of sin; who now proclaims peace; who gives perfect peace. Let us look to Jesus Christ, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, our High Priest and King, who loves to care for and keep us. Let us remember the blood of the eternal covenant, in the power of which God raised Him and He entered heaven; that blood is God's pledge that the covenant with its promises will be fulfilled in our hearts. Let us think of God's bringing Him again from the dead, that our faith and hope might be in God; the power that raised Jesus is the power that works in us. Yes, let us look, and worship, and adore this God of peace, who has done it all, who raised Christ through the blood of the covenant, that we might know and trust Him.

And let us believe the message that tells us: This God of peace, He will perfect you in every good thing. The God who perfected Christ will perfect you too. The God who has worked out such a perfect salvation for us, will perfect it in us. The more we gaze upon Him who has done such wondrous things for us, will we trust Him for this wondrous thing He promises to do in us, to perfect us in every good thing. What God did in Christ is the measure of what He will do in us to make us perfect. The same Omnipotence that worked in Christ to perfect Him, waits for our faith to trust its working in us day by day to perfect us in the doing of God's will. And on our part, the surrender to be made perfect will be the measure of our capacity to experience what God has done in Christ.

And now hear what this perfection is which this God promises to work in us. It is truly Divine, as Divine as the work of redemption: the God of peace, who brought again Christ from the dead, perfect you. It is intensely practical: in every good thing, to do His will. It is universal, with

nothing excluded from its operation: in every good thing. It is truly human and personal: God perfects us, so that we do His will. It is inward: God working in us that which is pleasing in His sight. And it is most blessed, giving us the consciousness that our life pleases Him, because it is His own work: He works in us that which is pleasing in His sight.

"God perfect you to do His will:" this is the conclusion of the whole Epistle. "To do His will:" this is the blessedness of the angels in heaven. For this the Son became man: by this He was perfected: in this, -- "in the which will," as done by Him, "we are sanctified." It is "TO DO His WILL" that God perfects us; that God works in us that which is pleasing in His sight.

Believer, let God's aim be your aim also. Say to God that you do desire this above everything. Give yourself, at once, entirely, absolutely, to this, and say with the Son, "I come to do Your will, O my God." This will give you an insight into the meaning, and the need, and the preciousness of the promise, "God perfect you to do His will." This will fix your heart upon God in the wondrous light of the truth: He who perfected Christ is perfecting me too. This will give you confidence, in the fulness of faith, to claim this God as your God, the God who perfects in every good thing.

The perfecting of the believer by God, restoring him to his right condition to fit him for doing His will, may be instantaneous. A valuable piece of machinery may be out of order. The owner has spent time and trouble in vain to put it right. The maker comes: it costs him but a moment to see and remove the hindrance. And so the soul that has for years wearied itself in the effort to do God's will, may often in one moment be delivered from some misapprehension as to what God demands or promises, and find itself restored, perfected for every good thing. And what was done in a moment becomes the secret of the continuous life, as faith each day claims the God that perfects, to do that which is well pleasing in His sight.

Yes, the soul that dares say to God that it yields itself in everything to do His will, and through all the humiliation which comes from the sense of emptiness and impotence, abides by its vow in simple trust, will be made strong to rise and to appropriate and experience in full measure what God has offered in this precious word: "The God of peace perfect you, in every good thing, to do His will, working in you that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ."

And it will sing with new meaning, and in fulness of joy, the song of adoring love: "To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Day 24 -- PERFECT PATIENCE MAKES A PERFECT MAN.

> "And let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing." Jas. 1: 4.

Perfection is a seed. The life, given in regeneration, is a perfect life. Through ignorance and unbelief the soul may never get beyond knowing that it has life, and remain unconscious of what a wonderful, perfect life it has.

Perfection is a seed. It is a blessed hour when the soul wakens up to know this, and with a perfect heart yields itself to appropriate all that God has given. The perfection of the perfect heart, a heart wholly yielded to seek God with all its strength, is again a seed, with infinite power of growth and increase.

Perfection is a growth. As the Christian awakens to the consciousness of what God asks and gives, and maintains the vow of a wholehearted surrender, he grows in his sense of need and his trust in the promise of a Divine life and strength, until all the promises of grace come to a focus in the one assurance, "The God of all grace will Himself perfect you"; that faith which was the fruit of previous growth, becomes the new seed of further growth. Perfection now develops into something riper and mellower. The overshadowing Presence of Him who perfects, rests continually on the spirit, and the whole character bears the impression of heavenliness and fellowship with the Unseen. The soul makes way for God, and gives Him time to do His work; the God of Peace, perfecting in every good thing, gets entire possession. The soul rests in the rest of God.

This is not the work of a day. Perfection is a growth. "You have need of patience, that having done the will of God, you may inherit the promise." "Be imitators of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Man is the creature of time, and is under the law of development. In the kingdom of heaven it is as in nature, from the seed first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. There is nothing at times that appears more mysterious to the believer than the slowness of God. It is as if our prayers are not heard, as if His promises are not fulfilled, as if our faith is vain. And all the time God is hastening on His work with all speed. He will avenge His own elect speedily, though He bear long with them.

"Let patience have its perfect work." We are so often impatient with ourselves, not content to trust God to do His work, and so hindering just when we want to hurry on His work. We are impatient with God; instead of the adoring trust of Him, the God of peace, who is perfecting us, we fret ourselves because we do not see what we had thought out for ourselves. "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him," is the law of faith, not only in times of well-being, but especially in the path of perfection. Faith is the law of the Christian life to an extent that very few realize. The

assurance that rests in the unseen power that is working out its Holy Purpose will never be disappointed. As it has been said of an elderly saint, "She was sure that, however long any soul might have to continue in the path of humiliation, with self-emptying, the end, with all who were faithful, would one day be a filling to overflowing of all their inward being with the presence of the Holy One."

"Let patience have its perfect work." This is the command. To those who obey it, the potential offered is certain, "that you may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing." How words are heaped up to make us appreciate what the aim and expectation of the believer ought to be! Perfect, something finished, that satisfies its purpose; entire, that in which every part is in its place; and lacking in nothing, just all that the Father expects: such is the Christian character as God's Spirit sets it before us. There is a perfection which the Christian is to regard as his duty and his life. Where patience has its perfect work it will bring forth what the husbandman longs for, fruit unto perfection. "God's work in man is the man. If God's teaching by patience have a perfect work in you, you are perfect."

But where there is to be this perfect fruit, there must first be the perfect seed. And that seed is the perfect heart. Without this, whence could patience have its perfect work? With this, every trial, every difficulty, every failure even, is accepted as God's training school, and God is trusted as the Faithful One, who is perfecting His own work. Let there be first the perfect heart -- that will lead to perfect patience, and that again to the fully perfected man.

Jesus Christ was Himself not perfected in one day: it took time; in Him patience had its perfect work. True faith recognizes the need of time, and rests in God. And time to us means days and years. Let us learn each day to renew the vow: "This day I intend to live for God as perfectly as His grace will enable me. This day I intend, in the patience of hope, to trust the God of all grace, who Himself is perfecting me. This day I intend to be perfect and entire, lacking nothing." With such a vow renewed day by day, with faith in Christ who has perfected us, and God who is perfecting us, patience will do its perfect work. And we will be perfect and entire, lacking nothing.

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 25 -- THE PERFECT TONGUE MARKS THE PERFECT MAN.

> "In many things we all stumble. If anyone does not stumble in word, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also." Jas. 3: 2.

There can be no perfection in art or science without attention to little things. One of the truest marks of genius is the power, in presence of the highest ideal, to attend to even the least details. No chain is stronger than its feeblest link. The weakest point in the character of a Christian is the measure of his nearness to perfection. It is in the little things of daily life that perfection is attained and proved.

The tongue is a little member. A word of the tongue is, oh! such a little thing in the eyes of many. And yet we are told by none less than our blessed Lord: "By your words you will be justified." When the Son of man comes in the glory of His Father to repay to every man according to his deeds, every word will be taken into account. In the light of the great day of God, if any man stumble not in word, the same is a perfect man. This is the full-grown man, who has attained maturity, who has reached unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

But is it possible for any man to be thus perfect, and not to stumble in a single word? Has not James just said, "In many things we all stumble?" Just think of all the foolish words one hears among Christians, the sharp words, the hasty, thoughtless, unloving words, the words that are only half honest and not spoken from the heart. Think of all the sins of the tongue against the law of perfect love and perfect truth, and we must admit the terrible force of James' statement: "In many things we all stumble." When he adds, "If any stumble not in word, the same is a perfect man," can he really mean that God expects that we should live so, and that we must seek and expect it too?

Let us think. With what objective does he use these words? In the beginning of his Epistle he had spoken of patience having its perfect work, that we may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing. There, entire perfection, with nothing lacking, is set before us as a definite promise to those who let patience have its perfect work. His Epistle is written, as all the Epistles are, under the painful impression of how far ordinary Christian experience is from such perfection, but in the faith that it is not a hopeless task to teach God's people that they ought to be, that they can be, perfect and entire, lacking in nothing. Where he begins to speak of the tongue, the two sides of the truth again rise up before him. The ordinary experience he expresses in the general statement: "In many things we all stumble." The will of God and the power of grace he sets forth in the blessed and not impossible ideal of all who seek to be perfect and entire: "If any man stumble not in word, the same is a perfect man." James speaks of it in all simplicity as a condition as actual as the other condition of everyone stumbling.

The question is again asked: But is it really a possible ideal? Does God expect it of us? Is grace

promised for it? Let us call in Peter as a witness, and listen to what God's Spirit says through him, as to that terrible necessity of always stumbling which some hold fast, as to the blessed possibility of being kept from stumbling. "Give the more diligence," he writes, "to make your calling and election sure; for if you do these things, you will never stumble." "Never" -- that includes, not even in word. Let us hear what Jude says, "Now unto Him, who is able to guard you from stumbling through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and power, before all time, and now, and forevermore. Amen." It is the soul that knows and without ceasing trusts God as a God who guards from stumbling, as a God who watches and keeps us every moment through Jesus Christ, that will without ceasing sing this song of praise.

The three texts on "stumbling" are the only ones in the New Testament in which the word occurs in reference to the Christian life. The text in James is heard quoted a hundred times for every time the texts in Peter and Jude are cited. And Christ has said, "According to your faith be it unto you." If our faith feeds only and always on, "In many things we all stumble," no wonder that we do stumble. If with that "stumble" we take the "stumble not" that follows, "If any man stumble not in word, the same is a perfect man," and the "not stumble" of Peter and Jude, the faith that embraces the promise will obtain it: God's power will translate it into our experience, and our life will be a living Epistle into which God's words have been transcribed. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks: out of a heart that is perfect towards God, in which the love of God is shed abroad, in which Christ dwells, the tongue will bring forth words of truth and uprightness, of love and gentleness, full of beauty and of blessing. God wills it: God works it: let us claim it.

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 26 -- GOD WILL HIMSELF PERFECT YOU.

> "The God of all grace, who called you unto His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered awhile, will Himself perfect, establish, and strengthen you. To Him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen." 1 Pet. 5: 10, 11.

Through suffering to glory: this is the keynote of the First Epistle of Peter. The word "suffer" occurs sixteen times, the word "glory" fourteen times. In its closing words the readers are reminded of all its teaching, as he writes to them: "The God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory, after you have suffered a little while." In no Epistle of the New Testament are the two aspects of Christ's death: that He suffered for us, and that we are to suffer with Him and like Him, so clearly and closely linked together. Fellowship with Christ, likeness to Christ, manifested in suffering, is the point of view from which Peter would have us look on life as the path to glory. To be a partaker of the sufferings and the glory of Christ is the Christian's privilege. He was perfected through suffering by God: the same God perfects us for suffering and glorifying Him in it.

"God will Himself perfect you!" In God alone is perfection. In Him is all perfection. And all perfection comes from Him. When we consider the wondrous perfection there is in the sun, in the laws it obeys, and in the blessings it dispenses, and remember that it owes all to the will of the Creator, we acknowledge that its perfection is from God. And so, through the whole of nature, to the tiniest insect that floats in the sunbeam, and the humblest little flower that basks in its light, everything owes its beauty to God alone. All His works praise Him. His work is perfect.

And have we not here in nature the open secret of Christian perfection? It is God who must perfect us! "God will Himself perfect you." What is revealed in nature, is the pledge of what is secured to us in grace. "It suited Him, for whom are all things, and of whom are all things, in leading many sons unto glory, to make the Leader of their salvation perfect through suffering." It was befitting that God should show that He is the God who works out perfection amid the weakness and suffering of a human life. This is what constitutes the very essence of salvation, to be perfected by God; to yield oneself to the God, for whom, and of whom are all things, Himself to perfect us.

God has planted deep in the heart of man the desire for perfection. Is it not this that stirs the spirit of the artist and the poet, of the discoverer and the artificer? Is it not the nearest possible approach to this that wakens admiration and enthusiasm? And is it only in grace that all thought and all joy of present perfection is to be banished? Certainly not, if God's word be true. The promise is sure and bright for this our earthly life: "God will Himself perfect you." Joined with the words, "establish, and strengthen you," the "Himself perfect you," can refer to nothing but the present daily life. God shall Himself put you into the right position, and in that position then establish and strengthen you, so as to fit you perfectly for the life you have to live, and the work you have to do.

We find it so hard to believe this, because we do not know what it means. "You are not under the law, but under grace." The law demands what we cannot give or do. Grace never asks what it does not give; and so the Father never asks what we cannot do. He Himself, who raised Jesus from the dead, is always ready, in that same resurrection power, to perfect us to do His will. Let us believe, and be still, until our soul is filled with the blessed truth, and we know that it will be done to us.

O my soul, learn to know this God, and claim Him, in this His character, as yours: "God will Himself perfect you!" Worship and adore Him here, until your faith is filled with the assurance: My God Himself is perfecting me. Regard yourself as the clay in the hands of the Great Artist, spending all His thought and time and love to make you perfect. Yield yourself in voluntary, loving obedience to His will and His Spirit. Yield yourself in full confidence into His very hands, and let the word ring through your whole being: GOD SHALL HIMSELF PERFECT YOU; perfectly fit you for all He intends you to be or do. Let every perfect bud or flower you see whisper its message: Only let God work; only wait upon God; GOD SHALL HIMSELF PERFECT YOU.

Believer! have you desired this? O claim it, claim it now. Or rather, claim now in very deed this God as your God. Just as the writer to the Hebrews, and Peter in this Epistle, gather up all their varied teaching into this one central promise, "God shall Himself perfect you," so there may come in the life of the believer a moment when he gathers up all his desires and efforts, all his knowledge of God's truth, and all his faith in God's promises, concentrates them in one simple act of surrender and trust, and, yielding himself wholly to do His will, dares to claim God as the God that perfects him. And his life becomes one doxology of adoring love: To Him be the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Day 27 -- PERFECT LOVE IS KEEPING CHRIST'S WORD.

> "Whosoever keeps His words, in him truly has the love of God been perfected." John 2: 5.

Tauler says of the Apostle John:

> "In three ways, dear children, did the beloved Lord attract to Himself the heart of John. First, did the Lord Jesus call him out of the world to make him an apostle. Next, did He grant to him to rest upon His loving breast. Thirdly, and this was the greatest and most perfect nearness, when on the holy day of Pentecost He gave to him the Holy Ghost, and opened to him the door through which he should pass into the heavenly places. Thus, children, does the Lord first call you from the world and make you to be the messengers of God. And next, He draws you close to Himself, that you may learn to know His holy gentleness and lowliness, and His deep and burning love, and His perfect unshrinking obedience. And yet this is not all. Many have been drawn thus far, and are satisfied to go no further. And yet they are far from the perfect nearness which the heart of Jesus desires. St. John lay at one moment on the breast of the Lord Jesus, and then he forsook Him and fled. If you have been brought so far as to rest on the breast of Christ, it is well. But yet there was to John a nearness still to come, one moment of which would be worth a hundred years of all that had gone before. The Holy Ghost was given to him -- the door was opened. There is a nearness in which we lose ourselves, and God is all in all. This may come to us in one swift moment, or we may wait for it with longing hearts, and learn to know it at last. It was of this that St. Paul spoke when he said that the thing which the heart has not conceived, God has now revealed to us by His Holy Spirit. The soul is drawn within the inner chamber, and there are the wonders and the riches revealed." (Three Friends of God, by Mrs. Bevan.)

To understand a writer it is often needful to know his character and history. When John wrote the Epistle he had for fifty years been living in that inmost nearness of which Tauler speaks, in the inner chamber within the veil. While on earth Jesus had found in him a congenial spirit, receptive of His highest spiritual teaching, one to whom He felt drawn in special love. Fifty years of communing with the Son in the glory of the Father, and experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit to make the eternal life, the heavenly life of Jesus in fellowship with the Father, an everyday reality, -- no wonder that when John testifies of it as a life of perfect love, the Church that is not living on this level can only speak of it as an ideal, in this life unattainable. To one who thinks of what John was and knew of his Lord, and what a Church under his teaching would be, the words are simply descriptive of characters he saw around him; men to whom he could write: "Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, we have boldness toward God . . . because we keep His

commandments, and do the things that are pleasing in His sight." "Whosoever keeps His word, in him truly has the love of God been perfected."

John is the disciple whom Jesus loved! The words Jesus spoke about the love of God had a special attraction for him; the love with which Jesus loved him exercised its mighty influence; the Holy Spirit that came from the heart of the glorified Jesus intensified and spiritualized it all; and John became the Apostle of Love, who, gazing into the very depths of the Divine Glory and Being, found there that GOD IS LOVE. With this word, "Love," as the sum of his theology, he links to the word he found in the Old Testament and in the writings of his brother apostles, the word "Perfect," and tells us that this is perfection, this the highest type of Christian character, the highest attainment of the Christian life -- for a man to have God's love perfected in him.

The condition and the mark of this being perfected in love Jesus had taught him: "If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him; and we will come to him, and make our abode with him." Keeping His word: this is the link between the love of the disciple and the love of the Father, leading to that wondrous union in which the Father's love draws Him to come and dwell in the loving heart. "If you keep my commandments," Jesus said, "you shall abide in my love: even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love." And John confirms from his own experience what the Master spoke: "Whosoever keeps His word, in him has the love of God been perfected."

Thank God! this is a life to be found on earth: God's love can be perfected in us. Let not what we see in the Church around us make us doubt God's word. When John spoke of Perfect Love, and Paul of the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, they testified from personal experience of what they had received in direct communication from the throne of glory. The words were to them the expression of a life of which we have little conception; to us they convey no more truth than our low experience can put into them. Oh! that our hearts might be roused to believe in their heavenly, supernatural, fulness of meaning, and not to rest until we know that the love that passes knowledge, the love that God is, the love of Christ, dwells within us as a fountain springing up unto everlasting life: "THE LOVE OF GOD PERFECTED IN US" -- the prospect is sure to everyone who will allow the love of God in Christ to have the mastery, and to prove what God can do for them that love Him.

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 28 -- PERFECT LOVE IS LOVING THE BRETHREN.

> "Beloved! if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man has beheld God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us." 1 John 4: 11, 12.

The first mark of a soul in whom the love of God is to be perfected is: keeping His word. The path of obedience, the loving obedience of the perfect heart, the obedience of a life wholly given up to God's will, is the path the Son opened up into the presence and the love of the Father. It is the only path that leads into perfect love.

The commandments of Christ are all included in the one word "Love," because "Love is the fulfilling of the law." "A new commandment I have given you, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you." This is Christ's word: he that keeps this word, keeps all the commandments. Love to the brethren is the second mark of a soul seeking to enter the life of perfect love.

In the very nature of things it cannot be otherwise. "Love seeks not her own:" love loses itself in going out to live in others. Love is the death of self: where self still lives there can be no thought of perfect love. Love is the very being and glory of God; it is His nature and property as God to give of His own life to all His creatures, to communicate His own goodness and blessedness. The gift of His Son is the gift of Himself to be the life and joy of man. When that love of God enters the heart it imparts its own nature -- the desire to give itself to the very death for others. When the heart wholly yields itself to be transformed into this nature and likeness, then Love takes possession; there the love of God is perfected.

The question is often asked whether it be the love of God to us, or our love to God, that is meant by perfect love. The word includes both, because it implies a great deal more. The love of God is One, as God is One: His Life, His very Being. Where that Love descends and enters, it retains its nature; it is ever the Divine Life and Love within us. God's love to us, and our love to God and Christ, our love to the brethren and to all men -- all these are but aspects of one and the same love. Just as there is one Holy Spirit in God and in us, so it is one Divine Love, the Love of the Spirit, that dwells in God and in us.

To know this, is a wonderful help to faith. It teaches us that to love God, or the brethren, or our enemies, is not a thing our efforts can attain We can only do it, because the Divine Love is dwelling in us; only as far as we yield ourselves to the Divine Love as a Living Power within, as a life that has been born into us, and that the Holy Spirit strengthens into action. Our part is first of all to rest, to cease from effort, to know that He is in us, and to give way to the love that dwells and works in us in a power that is from above.

How well John remembered the night when Jesus spoke so wonderfully of love in His parting words! How impossible it appeared to the disciples indeed to love as He had loved! How much there had been among them of pride, and envy, and selfishness; anything but love like His! How it had broken out among them that very night at the supper table! They never could love like the Master -- it was impossible.

But what a change was wrought when the Risen One breathed on them, and said, "Receive the Holy Ghost!" And how that change was consummated when the Holy Spirit came down from heaven, and out of that wonderful Love which there flowed in holy interchange between the Father and the Son, when they met again in the glory, shed abroad in their hearts THE LOVE OF GOD! In the love of the day of Pentecost, the Perfect Love celebrated its first great triumph in the hearts of men.

The Love of God still reigns. The Spirit of God still waits to take possession of hearts where He has hitherto had too scanty room. He had been in the disciples all the time, but they had not known of what manner of spirit they were. He had come upon them on that evening when the Risen One breathed upon them. But it was on Pentecost He filled them so that Love Divine prevailed and overflowed, and they were perfected in Love. Let every effort we make to love, and every experience of how feeble our love is, lead us and draw us on to Jesus on the Throne. In Him the Love of God is revealed and glorified, and rendered accessible to us. Let us believe that the Love of God can come down as a fire that will consume and destroy self, and make love to one another, fervent perfect love, the one mark of discipleship. Let us believe that this Love of God, Perfect Love, can be shed abroad in our hearts, in measure to us hitherto unknown, by the Holy Ghost given to us. Our tongues and lives, our homes and Churches, will then prove to sinful, perishing fellow-men that there still are children of God in whom the Love of God is perfected.

Even as the whole Christian life, so love too has its two stages. There is love seeking, struggling, and doing its best to obey, and ever failing. And there is love finding, resting, rejoicing, and ever triumphing. This takes place when self and its efforts have been given into the grave of Jesus, and His Life and love have taken their place. When the birth of heavenly love in the soul has come; in the power of the heavenly life, loving is natural and easy; Christ dwells in the heart, now we are rooted and grounded in love, and know the love that transcends knowledge.

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 29 -- PERFECT LOVE: GOD ABIDING IN US.

> "No man has seen God at any time: if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit." 1 John 4: 12, 13.

"No man has seen God at any time:" the vision of God we may not yet have. The all-consuming, all-absorbing fire of its glory, bringing death to all that is of nature, is not consistent with this our earthly state. But there is given to us in its stead an equivalent, that can prepare and train us for the beatific vision, and also satisfy the soul with all that it can contain of God. We cannot behold God, but we can have GOD ABIDING IN US, and HIS LOVE PERFECTED IN US. Though the brightness of God's glory is not now to be seen, the presence of what is the very essence of that glory -- His Love -- may now be known. God's love perfected in us, God Himself abiding in us: this is the heaven we can have on earth.

And the way to this blessedness? "God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us, if we love one another." We may not see God; but we see our brother, and, lo! in him we have an object that will repay us for the loss of the vision of God. An object that will awaken and call forth the Divine love within us; will exercise and strengthen and develop it; will open the way for the Divine love to do its beloved work through us, and so to perfect us in Love; will awaken the Divine complacency and draw it down to come and take up its abode within us. In my brother I have an object on which God bids me prove all my love to him. In loving him, however unlovely he may be, love proves that self no longer lives; that it is a flame of that fire which consumed the Lamb of God; that it is God's love being perfected in us; that it is God Himself living and loving within us.

"If we love one another, God abides in us. By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit." The wondrous knowledge that God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us, is no result of reflection, a deduction from what we see in ourselves. No, Divine things, Divine Love, the Divine indwelling, are only seen in a Divine light. "By this we know them, because He has given us of His Spirit." John remembers how little the disciples understood or experienced of the words of Jesus until that never-to-be forgotten day when, in the light of the fire that came from heaven, all became luminous and real. It is the Holy Spirit alone, not in His ordinary gracious workings, such as the disciples also had before that day, but in His special bestowment, direct from the throne of the exalted Jesus, to make Him personally and permanently present to the soul that will rest content with nothing less -- it is the Holy Spirit alone, by whom we know that God dwells in us, and we in Him, and that His love is perfected in us.

It is in the Christian life now still, even as it was then. It is the special work of the Holy Spirit to reveal the indwelling God and to perfect us in love. By slow steps we have to master now one side of truth and then another; to practise now one grace and then the very opposite. For a time our

whole heart goes out in the aim to know and do His will. Then, again, it is as if there is but one thing to do -- to love -- and we feel as if in our own home, in all our dealings with men, in our outlook in the Church and the world, we needed but to practise love. After a time we feel how we fail, and we turn to the word that calls us to faith, to cease from self and to trust in Him who works both to will and to do. Here once more we come short, and we feel that this alone can meet our need -- a share in the Pentecostal gift -- the Spirit given in power as not before. Let none faint nor be discouraged. Let us seek to obey, and to love, and to trust with a perfect heart. In that whereunto we have attained let us be faithful. But so let us press on to perfection: let us confidently expect that this portion also of the word will be made all our own: "If we love one another, God abides in us, and the love of God is perfected in us. By this we know it, because He has given us of His Spirit."

It is only in the path of love -- love in practical exercise seeking to be perfect love -- that this wondrous blessing can be found: God abiding in us, and we in Him. And it is only by the Holy Ghost that we can know that we have it. God abiding in us, and His love perfected in us: God is Love; how sure it is that He longs to abide with us! God is Love, who sends forth the Spirit of His Son to fill the hearts that are open to Him: how sure it is that we can be perfected in love. A perfect heart can count upon being filled with a perfect love: let nothing less than perfect love be our aim, that we may have God abiding in us, and His love perfected in us; we shall know it by the Spirit which He has given us.

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 30 -- PERFECT LOVE: AS HE IS, EVEN SO ARE WE.

> "Herein is love made perfect in us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, even so are we in this world." 1 John 4: 17.

Let us look back on the steps in the life of perfected love that have been set before as thus far. The Divine love entering the heart, manifests itself first in loving obedience to Christ. Of that obedience, love to the brethren in active exercise becomes the chief mark and manifestation. In this obedient love and loving obedience, the principle of fellowship with God, God abiding in us, is developed and strengthened. Of this fellowship the Holy Spirit gives the evidence and abiding consciousness. Such is the path in which love is perfected. Obedience to Christ: love to the brethren; the indwelling of God in us, and us in Him; the communication and revelation of all this by the Holy Spirit: all these are correlated ideas -- they imply and condition each other. Together they make up the blessed life of perfect love.

The perfect heart began by seeking God wholly and alone. It found Him in the perfect way, of obedient love to the Lord, ministering and loving to the brethren. So it came in Christ to the Father, and fellowship with Him. So it was prepared and opened for that special illumination of the Spirit which revealed God's indwelling: the Father came to take up His abode. What was at first but a little seed -- the perfect heart -- has grown up and borne fruit; the perfect heart is now a heart in which the love of God is perfected. Love has taken full possession, and reigns throughout the whole being.

Has the apostle now anything more that he can say of perfect love? Yes; two things. He tells what is its highest blessing: "Herein is love made perfect in us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment." And what is its deepest ground or reason? "Because as He is, even so are we in the world." The former of these two thoughts we find again in the next verse. Let us here consider the latter.

"Because as He is, even so are we in the world." It is in Christ we are perfect. It is with the same perfection with which Christ was perfected Himself that He made us perfect, that God now perfects us. Our place in Christ implies perfect unity of life and spirit, of disposition and character. John gathers up all the elements of the perfect love he has mentioned, and in view of the day of judgment, and the boldness perfect love will give us, combines them into this one, "Because as He is, even so are we in the world."

"As He is, so are we." In chapter 2 he had said, "He that says he abides in Him, ought himself also to walk even as He walked." Likeness to Christ in His walk of obedience on earth is the mark of perfect love.

In chapter 3 we read, "Everyone that has this hope set on Him (the hope of being like Him, when we will see Him as He is), perfects himself, even as He is pure." Likeness to Christ in His heavenly purity is the mark of perfect love.

In chapter 3 we read further, "Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Likeness to Christ in His love to us is the mark of perfect love.

In the last night Jesus prayed, "That they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one." Likeness to Christ in His fellowship with the Father, God in us and we in Him, is the mark of perfect love. God gave Christ to save us, by becoming our life, by taking us up into union with Himself. God could have no higher aim, could bestow no higher blessing than that He should see Christ in us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment. Herein is love made perfect, "because as He is, even so are we in the world."

"That we may have boldness in the day of judgment," God has committed judgment unto the Son, as the perfected Son of man. His judgment will be a spiritual one: Himself will be its standard; likeness to Him the fitness to pass in and reign with Him. Perfect love is perfect union and perfect likeness; we have boldness even in the day of judgment: because as He is, even so are we in this world. O ye seekers after perfection! it is in Christ it is to be found. In Him is God's love revealed; in Him and His life you enter into it, and it enters into you; in Him love takes possession, and transforms you into His likeness; in Him God comes to make His abode in you; in Him love is perfected. The prayer is fulfilled, "That the love wherewith You love Me may be in them, and I in them." The love of God is perfected in us; we are perfected in love; we have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, even so are we.

The Love of God, as a fire from the altar before the Throne, as the Presence of the God of love Himself living in us, makes itself felt in its Heavenly power, so that the world may know that God has loved us, as He loved His Son. The Love that flows from God to Christ rests on us also, and makes us one with Him. As He, the Son, is, in heaven, even so are we, in the world, living in the Father and in His love.

Be Perfect

by Andrew Murray

Day 31 -- PERFECT LOVE: CASTING OUT FEAR.

> "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear: because fear has punishment. And he that fears is not made perfect in love." 1 John 4: 18.

Bengel says that in the religious life there are four steps: serving God without fear or love; with fear without love; with fear and love; with love without fear. And Augustine: Fear prepares the way for love: where there is no fear, there is no opening for love to enter. Fear is the medicine, love the healing. Fear leads to love; when love is perfected fear is done. Perfect love casts out fear. Herein is love perfected, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, even so are we in this world.

The day of judgment! What a day that will be! Many have no fear of that day, because they trust that they have been justified. They imagine that the same grace which justified the ungodly will give the passage into heaven. This is not what Scripture teaches. The reality of our having obtained forgiveness will be tested in that day by our having bestowed forgiveness on others. Our fitness for entering the kingdom, by the way in which we have served Jesus in the ministry of love to the sick and the hungry. In our justification all this had no part: in the judgment it will be the all-important element. If we are to see Him as He is, and to be like Him, we must have purified ourselves as He is pure. It is perfect love, it is to be in this world even as He is, that casts out fear, and gives us boldness in the day of judgment. He that fears is not made perfect in love.

The day of judgment! What a day! What a blessed thing to have boldness in that day! To meet the burning, fiery furnace of God's holiness, to be ready to be judged by our conformity to Christ's likeness and image, and to have no fear, what blessedness! It is this that makes what Scripture reveals of perfection and of love perfected in us of such immediate and vital interest to each one of us.

We have come to the close of our meditations on what Scripture teaches of the perfection attainable in this life. We began with the perfect heart, the heart wholly set upon God, as the mark of the man whom God counts a perfect man. We saw the perfect man walking in a perfect way, "walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." We found with the New Testament the standard at once infinitely raised. Perfect as the Father, the child's standard; perfected as the Master, the disciple's model; perfect in all the will of God, the Christian's aim and hope. And then to meet this high demand, the word came to us: perfect in Christ, perfected by Christ, God Himself perfecting us in every good thing. And now John, the beloved disciple, has summed up all the teaching of the word with his perfect love. Keeping Christ's word, loving the brethren, abiding in God, filled with the Spirit, being even as Christ is, we can live perfected in love. With a heart that does not condemn us, we have boldness before God, because we keep His commandments, and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. With God's love perfected in us

we have boldness in the day of judgment.

Beloved fellow-Christian! To have the love of God perfected in us; to be perfected in love; perfect love: these all are a Divine possibility, a Divine reality, the ripened fruit of the perfect life. We know now the tree on which this fruit grows. Its root is a heart perfect with God, walking before Him and being perfect. Let us be perfect in our surrender to Him in obedience and trust. Let deep dependence on Him, let faith in Him, let a patient waiting, having our expectation from Him alone, be the spirit of our daily life. It is God, Himself, who must give it. Let us count upon Him for nothing less than to be perfected in love and to have God abiding in us. This is what He longs to do for us.

The tree that grows on this root is a life in union with Christ, aiming at perfect conformity to Him. Perfect in Christ, perfected by Christ, perfected by God like Christ and through Christ: when these words, pregnant with the will and love of God and the mystery of redemption, become the daily life of the soul, the perfect heart rules the life, and the believer learns to stand perfect in all the will of God. The tree brings forth fruit abundantly.

Even unto perfection. Obedience and brotherly love, fellowship with God and likeness to Christ, and the unhindered flow and rule of the Holy Spirit, lead the soul into a life of perfect love. The God of love gets His heart's desire; the love of God celebrates its triumph; the days of heaven are begun on earth; the soul is perfected in love.

"Finally, brethren, farewell! Be perfected." Be perfect with God. Let nothing less be your aim. God will show Himself perfect with you, will perfectly reveal Himself, will perfectly possess you. Believe this. God will Himself perfect you day by day, with each new morning you may claim it. Live in surrender to this His work, and accept it. And fear not, nor be discouraged. God Himself will grant it to you to know what it is: God dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us.

Closing Prayer:

O my Father! I desire to walk in your presence this day, and be perfect. You have commanded it; and You give the enabling grace. I desire to be perfect with the Lord my God. I desire to serve You with a perfect heart. I desire to be perfect, as the Father is perfect.

These are Your own words, O my God! I resolve to accept and obey them in childlike simplicity and trust.

I thank You for the unspeakable gift, Your beloved Son, who was Himself perfected through suffering and obedience in His sacrifice on the cross, and by that sacrifice has perfected us also. I thank You that through Him You now perfect me in every good thing, Yourself working in me that which is pleasing in Your sight. You will show Yourself strong to them that are of a perfect heart.

I thank You, O my Father, for the blessed expectation Your word holds out of being perfected in love here on earth; for the blessed witness of the beloved disciple to its truth in him and around him; for the power and light of the Holy Spirit that sheds abroad Your love in our hearts, and makes it all a reality and a consciousness. The Lord will perfect that which concerns me: to Him be the glory. Amen.

But in connection with the sacrifice of Abel all is plain. He brought of "the firstlings of his lock" to the Lord as a sacrifice, and there, in connection with the first act of worship recorded in the Bible, blood was shed. We learn from Hebrews (xi. 4) that it was "by faith" Abel offered an acceptable sacrifice, and his name stands first in the record of those whom the Bible calls "believers." He had this witness borne to him "that he pleased God." His faith, and God's good pleasure in him, are closely connected with the sacrificial blood.

In the light of later revelation, this testimony, given at the very beginning of human history, is of deep significance. It shows that there can be no approach to God; no fellowship with Him by faith; no enjoyment of His favour, apart from THE BLOOD.

Scripture gives but short notice of the following sixteen centuries. Then came THE FLOOD, which was God's judgement on sin, by the destruction of the world of mankind.

But God brought forth a new earth from that awful baptism of water. Notice, however, that the new earth must be baptised used also with blood, and the first recorded act of Noah, after he had left the ark, was the offering of a burnt sacrifice to God. As with Abel, so with Noah a t a new beginning, it was "NOT WITHOUT BLOOD."

Sin once again prevailed, and God laid an entirely new foundation for the establishment of His Kingdom on earth.

By the divine call of Abram, and the miraculous birth of Isaac, God undertook the formation of a people to serve Him. But this purpose was not o accomplished apart from the shedding of THE BLOOD. This is apparent in the most solemn hour of Abraham's life.

God had already entered into covenant relationship with Abraham, and his faith had already been severely tried, and had stool the test. It was reckoned, or counted to him, for righteousness. Yet he must learn that Isaac, the son of promise, who belonged wholly to God, can be truly surrendered to God only by death.

Isaac must die. For Abraham, as well as for Isaac, only by death could freedom from the self-life be obtained.

Abraham must offer Isaac on the altar.

That was not an arbitrary command of God. It was the revelation of a divine truth, that it is only through heath, that a life truly consecrated to God is possible. But it was impossible for Isaac to die and rise again from the dead; for on account of sin, death would hold him fast. But see, his life was spared, and a ram was offered in his place. Through the blood that then flowed on Mount Moorish his life was spared. He and the people which sprang from him, live before God "NOT WITHOUT BLOOD." By that blood, however, he was in a figure raised again from the ahead. The great lesson of substitution is here clearly taught.

Four hundred years pass, and Isaac has become, in Egypt, the people of Israel. Through her deliverance from Egyptian bondage Israel was to be recognised as God's first-born among the nations. Here, also, it is "NOT WITHOUT BLOOD." Neither the electing grace of God, nor His covenant with Abraham, nor the exercise of His omnipotence, which could so easily have destroyed their oppressors, could dispense with the necessity of THE BLOOD.

What THE BLOOD accomplished on Mount Moorish for one person, who was the Father of the nation, must now be experienced by that nation. By the sprinkling of the door frames of the Israelites with the BLOOD of the

Paschal lamb; by the institution of the Passover as an enduring ordinance with the words-" When I see the BLOOD I will pass over you," the people were taught that life can be obtained only by the death of a substitute. Life was possible for them only through THE BLOOD of a life given in their place, and appropriated by " the sprinkling of that blood."

Fifty days later this lesson was enforced in a striking manner. Israel had reached Sinai. God had given His Law as the foundation of His covenant. That covenant must now be established, but as it is expressly stated in Hebrews ix. 7, "NOT WITHOUT BLOOD." The Sacrificial BLOOD must be sprinkled, first on the altar, and then on the book of the Covenant, representing God's side of that Covenant; then on the people, with the declaration, "This is THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT" (Exodus xxiv).

It was in that BLOOD the Covenant had its foundation and power. It is by THE BLOOD alone, that God and man can be brought into covenant fellowship. That which bad been foreshadowed at the Gate of Eden, on Mount Ararat, on Moriah, and in Egypt was now confirmed at the foot of Sinai, in a most solemn manner. Without BLOOD there could be no access by sinful man to a Holy God.

There is, however, a marked difference between the manner of applying the blood in the former cases as compared with the latter. On Moriah the life was redeemed by the shedding of the blood. In Egypt it was sprinkled on the door posts of the houses ; but at Sinai, it was sprinkled on the persons themselves. The contact was closer, the application more powerful.

Immediately after the establishment of the covenant the command was givers, "Let them make me a. sanctuary that I may dwell among them " (Exod. xxv. 8). They were to enjoy the full blessedness of having they God of the Covenant abiding among them. Through His grace they may find Him, and serve Him in His house.

He Himself gave, with the minutest care, directions for the arrangement and service of that house. But notice that THE BLOOD is the centre and reason of all this. Draw near to the vestibule of the earthly temple of the Heavenly King, and the first thing visible is the ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING, where the sprinkling of blood continues, without ceasing, from morning till evening. Enter the Holy Place, and the most conspicuous thing is the golden altar of incense, which also, together with the veil, is constantly sprinkled with the BLOOD. Ask what lies beyond the Holy Place, and you will be told that it is the MOST HOLY PLACE where God dwells. If you ask how He dwells there, and how He is approached, you will be told "NOT WITHOUT BLOOD." The golden throne where His glory shines, is itself sprinkled with THE BLOOD, once every year, when the High Priest alone enters to bring in THE BLOOD, and to worship God. The highest act in that worship is the sprinkling of THE BLOOD.

If you inquire further, you will be told that always, and for everything, THE BLOOD is the one thing needful. At the consecration of the House, or of the Priests; at the birth of a child; in the deepest penitence on account of sin; in the highest festival; always, and in everything, the way to fellowship with God is through THE BLOOD alone.

This continued for fifteen hundred years. At Sinai, in the desert, at Shiloh, in the Temple on Mount Moriah it continued till our Lord came to make an end of all shadows by bringing in the substance, and try establishing a fellow ship with the Holy One, in spirit and truth.

II. WHAT OUR LORD JESUS HIMSELF TEACHES ABOUT THE BLOOD.

With His coming old things passed away, and all things became new.

He came from the Father in Heaven, and can tell us in divine words the way to the Father.

It is sometimes said that the words "NOT WITHOUT BLOOD" belong to the Old Testament. But what does our Lord Jesus Christ say? Notice, first, that when John the Baptist announced His coming, he spoke of Him as filling a dual office, as "THE LAMB OF GOD that taketh away the sin of the world" ; and then as "the One who would baptize with the Holy Spirit." The outpouring of the BLOOD of the Lamb of God must take place, before the outpouring of the Spirit could be bestowed. Only when all that the Old Testament taught about THE BLOOD has been fulfilled, can the Dispensation of the Spirit begin.

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself plainly declared that leis death on the Cross was the purpose for which He came into the world ; that it was the necessary condition of the redemption and life which He came to bring. He clearly states that in connection with His death the shedding of His BLOOD was necessary.

In the Synagogue at Capernaum He spoke of Himself as "THE Bread of Life"; of His flesh, "that He would give it for the life of the world." Four times over He said most emphatically, "Except ye . . . drink leis BLOOD ye have no life in you." "He that drinketh my BLOOD hath everlasting life." "My BLOOD is drink indeed." "He that drinketh my BLOOD dwelleth in me and I in him" (John vi.). Our Lord thus declared the fundamental fact that He Himself, as the Son of the Father, who came to restore to us our lost life, can do this in no other way than by dying for us; by shedding His blood for us; and then making us partakers of its power.

Our Lord confirmed the teaching of the Old Testament Offerings-that man can live only through the death of another, and thus obtain a life that through Resurrection has become eternal.

But Christ Himself cannot make us partakers of that eternal life which He has procured for us, save by the shedding of His blood, and causing us to drink it. Marvellous fact! " NOT WITHOUT BLOOD " can eternal life be ours.

Equally striking is our Lord's declaration of the same truth on the last night of His earthly life. Before He completed the great work of His life by giving it " as a ransom for many," He instituted the Holy Supper, saying-" This cup is the New Testament in MY BLOOD that is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins. Drink ye all of it." (Matt. xxvi. 28). "without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins." Without remission of sins there is no life. But by the shedding of His BLOOD He has obtained a new life for us. By what He calls " the drinking of His blood " He shares His life with us. The blood SHED in the Atonement, which frees us from the SIN, the guilt of sin; and from death, the punishment of sin; the blood, which by faith we drink, bestows on us His life. The BLOOD He shed was, in the first place FOR us, and is then given TO us.

III. THE TEACHING OF THE APOSTLES UNDER THE INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

After His Resurrection and Ascension, our Lord is not any longer known by the Apostles "after the flesh." Now, all that was symbolical has passed away, and the deep spiritual truths expressed by symbol, are unveiled.

But there is no veiling of THE BLOOD. It still occupies a prominent place.

Turn first to the Epistle to the Hebrews, which was written purposely to show that the Temple service had become unprofitable, and was intended by God to pass away, now that Christ had come.

Here, if anywhere, it might be expected that the Holy Spirit would emphasise the true spirituality of God's purpose, yet it is just here that the Blood of Jesus is spoken of in a manner that imparts a new value to the phrase.

We read concerning our Lord that "by His own blood he entered into the holy place" (Heb. ix. 12).

"The Blood of Christ-shall purge your conscience" (ver. 14).

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. x. I9).

"Ye are come-to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling" (xii. 24).

"Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood suffered without the gate" (xiii. 12, 23).

"God-brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus-through the blood of the everlasting covenant" (xiii. 20).

By such words the Holy Spirit teaches us that the blood is really the central power of our entire redemption. "NOT WITHOUT BLOOD" is as valid in the New Testament as in the Old.

Nothing but the Blood of Jesus, shed in His death for sin, can cover sin on God's side, or remove it on ours.

We find the same teaching in the writings of the Apostles. Paul writes of "being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus . . . through faith in his blood" (Rom. iii. 24, 25), Of "being now justified by his blood" (v. 9).

To the Corinthians he declares that the "cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the Blood of Christ" (I Cor. x. I6).

In the Epistle to the Galatians he uses the word "CROSS" to convey the same meaning, while in Colossians he united the two words and speaks of "The Blood of his Cross" (Gal. vi. 14 ; Col. i. 20).

He reminds the Ephesians that "We have redemption through his blood" and that we "are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. i. 7 and ii. I3).

Peter reminds his readers that they were "Elect . . . unto obedience and sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus" (I Pet. i. 2), that they were redeemed by "the precious blood of Christ" (ver. 19).

See how John assures his "little children" that "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John i. 7). The Son is He "who came not by water only but by water and blood" (v. 6).

All of them agree together in mentioning the blood, and in glorying in it, as the power by which eternal redemption through Christ, is fully accomplished, and is then applied by the Holy Spirit.

IV. But perhaps this is merely earthly language. What has Heaven to say? WHAT DO we LEARN FROM THE BOOK OF REVELATION CONCERNING THE FUTURE GLORY AND THE BLOOD?

It is of the greatest importance to notice, that in the revelation which God has given in this book, of the glory of His throne, and the blessedness of those who surround it, the blood still retains its remarkably prominent place.

On the throne John saw "A Lamb as it had been slain" (Rev. v. 6). As the Elders fell down before the Lamb they sang a new song saying, "Thou art worthy . . . for thou vast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood" (vers. 8 and 9).

Later on when he saw the great company which no man could number, he was told in reply to his question as to who they were, "They have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Then again, when he heard the song of victory over the defeat of Satan, its strain was, "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb" (xii. 11).

In the glory of heaven, as seen by John, there was no phrase by which the great purposes of God; the wondrous love of the Son of God; the power of His redemption; and the joy and thanksgiving of the redeemed; can be gathered up and expressed save this-"THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB." From the beginning to the end of Scripture; from the closing of the gates of Eden, to the opening of the gates of the Heavenly Zion, there runs through Scripture a golden tbread. It is "THE BLOOD" that unites the beginning and the end; that gloriously restores what sin had destroyed.

It is not difficult to see what lessons the Lord wishes us to learn from the fact that the blood occupies such a prominent place in Scripture.

i. God has no other way of dealing with sin, or the sinner, save through the blood.

For victory over sin and the deliverance of the sinner God has no other means or thought than "THE BLOOD OF CHRIST." Yes, it is indeed something that surpasses all understanding.

All the wonders of grace are focused here-the Incarnation, by which He took upon Himself our flesh and blood; the love, that spared not itself but surrendered itself to death; the righteousness, which could not forgive sin till the penalty was borne; the substitution, by which He the Righteous One, atoned for us the unrighteous; the atonement for sin, and the justification of the sinner, thus made possible; renewed fellowship with God; together with the cleansing, and sanctification, to fit us for the enjoyment of that fellowship; the true oneness in life with the Lord Jesus, as He gives us His blood to drink; the eternal joy of the hymn of praise, "Thou hast redeemed us to God"; all these are but rays of the wonderous light which are reflected upon us from "THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF JESUS."

ii. The blood must have the same place in our hearts which it has with God.

From the beginning of God's dealings with man, yes, from before the foundation of the world, the heart of God has rejoiced in that blood. Our heart will never rest, nor find salvation, till we too learn to walk, and glory in the power of that blood.

It is not only the penitent sinner, longing for pardon, who must thus value it. No --the redeemed will experience that just as God in His temple sits upon a throne of grace, where the blood is ever in evidence, so there is nothing that draws our hearts nearer to God, filling them with God's love, and joy, and glory, as living in constant,

spiritual view of that blood.

iii. Let us take time and trouble to learn the ,full blessing and power of that blood.

The blood of Jesus is the greatest mystery of eternity, the deepest mystery of the divine wisdom. Let us not imagine that we can easily grasp its meaning. God thought 4,000 years necessary to prepare men for it, and we also must take time, if we are to gain a knowledge of the power of the blood.

Even taking time is of no avail, unless there is definite taking of sacrificial trouble. Sacrificial blood always meant the offering of a life. The Israelite could not obtain blood for the pardon of his sin, unless the life of something that belonged to him was offered in sacrifice. The Lord Jesus did not offer up His own life, and shed His blood to . spare us from the sacrifice of our lives. No, indeed 1 but to make the sacrifice of our lives possible and desirable.

The hidden value of His blood is the spirit of self-sacrifice, and where the blood really touches the heart, it works out in that heart, a like spirit of self-sacrifice. We learn to give up ourselves and our lives, so as to press into the full power of that new life, which the blood. has provided.

We give our time in order that we may become acquainted with these things by God's Word. We separate ourselves from sin and worldly-mindedness, and self-will, that the power of the blood may not be hindered, for it is just these things that the blood seeks to remove.

We surrender ourselves wholly to God in prayer and faith, so as not to think our own thoughts, and not to hold our own lives as a prize, but as possessing nothing save what He bestows. Then He reveals to us the glorious and blessed life which has been prepared for us by the blood.

iv. We can rely upon the Lord Jesus to reveal to us the power of His blood.

It is by this confident trust in Him that the blessing obtained by the blood becomes ours. We must never, in thought, separate the blood from the High Priest who shed it, and ever lives to apply it.

He who once gave His blood for us, will, oh I so surely, every moment, impart its efficacy. Trust Him to do this. Trust Him to open your eyes, and to give you a deeper spiritual insight. Trust Him to teach you to think about the blood as God thinks about it. Trust Him to impart to you, and to make effective in you, all that He enables you to see.

Trust Him above all, in the power of His eternal High Priesthood, to work out in you, unceasingly, the full merits of His blood, so that your whole life may be an uninterrupted abiding in the sanctuary of God's presence.

Believer, you who have come to the knowledge of the precious blood, hearken to the invitation of your Lord. Come nearer. Let Him teach you; let Him bless you. Let Him cause His blood to become to you spirit, and life, and power, and truth.

Begin now, at once, to open your soul in faith, to receive the full, mighty, heavenly effects of the precious blood, in a more glorious manner than you have ever experienced. He Himself will work these things out in your life.

The Power of the Blood

by Andrew Murray

CHAPTER 2

Redemption by Blood

"Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things . . . but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot"-I Pet. i. 18, 79.

THE shedding of His blood was the culmination of the sufferings of our Lord. The atoning efficacy of those sufferings was in that shed blood. It is therefore of great importance that the believer should not rest satisfied with the mere acceptance of the blessed truth that he is redeemed by that blood, but should press on to a fuller knowledge of what is meant by that statement, and to learn what that blood is intended to do in a surrendered soul.

Its effects are manifold, for we read in Scripture of RECONCILIATION through the blood; CLEANSING through the blood; SANCTIFICATION through the blood; UNION WITH GOD through the blood; VICTORY over Satan through the blood; LIFE through the blood.

These are separate blessings but are all included in one sentence: REDEMPTION BY THE BLOOD.

It is only when the believer understands what these blessings are, and by what means they may become his, that he can experience the full power of REDEMPTION.

Before passing on to consider in detail these several blessings let us first inquire, in a more general way, concerning THE POWER OF THE BLOOD OF JESUS.

1st. WHEREIN DOES THE POWER OF THAT BLOOD LIE?

2nd. WHAT HAS THAT POWER ACCOMPLISHED?

3rd. HOW CAN WE EXPERIENCE ITS EFFECTS?

I. WHEREIN DOES THE POWER OF THAT BLOOD LIE? or what is it that gives to the blood of Jesus such power? How is it that in the blood, alone, there is power possessed by nothing else?

The answer to this question is found in Leviticus xvii. 11. "The life of the flesh is in the blood" and "I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."

It is because the soul, or life, is in the blood; and that the blood is offered to God on the altar, that it has in it redemptive power.

i. The soul or life is in the blood, therefore the value of the blood corresponds to the value of the life that is in it.

The life of a sheep, or goat, is of less value than the life of an ox, and so the blood of a sheep or a goat in an offering, is of less value than the blood of an ox (Lev. iv. 3, 24, 27).

The life of man is more valuable than that of many sheep or oxen.

And now who can tell the value or the power of the blood of Jesus? In that blood, dwelt the soul of the holy Son of God.

The eternal life of the Godhead was carried in that blood (Acts xx. 28).

The power of that blood in its divers effects is nothing less than the eternal power of God Himself. What a glorious thought for everyone who desires to experience the full power of the blood

ii. But the power of the blood lies above everything else in the fact that it is offered to God on the altar for redemption.

When we think of blood as shed, we think of death; death follows, when the blood or the soul is poured out. Death makes us think of sin, for death is the punishment of sin. God gave Israel the blood on the altar, as the atonement or covering for sin; that means-the sins of the transgressor were laid on the victim, and its death was reckoned as the death or punishment for the sins laid upon it.

The blood was thus the life given up to death for the satisfaction of the law of God, and in obedience to His command. Sin was so entirely covered and atoned for, it was no longer reckoned as that of the transgressor. He was forgiven.

But all these sacrifices and offerings were only types, and shadows, till the Lord Jesus came. His blood was the reality to which these types pointed.

His blood was in itself of infinite value, because it carried His soul or life. But the atoning virtue of His blood was infinite also, because of the manner in which it was shed. In holy obedience to the Father's will He subjected Himself to the penalty of the broken law, by pouring out His soul unto death. By that death, not only was the penalty borne, but the law was satisfied, and the Father glorified. His blood atoned for sin, and thus made it powerless. It has a marvellous power for removing sin, and opening heaven for the sinner; whom it cleanses, and sanctifies, and makes meet for heaven.

It is because of the Wonderful Person whose blood was shed; and because of the wonderful way in which it was shed, fulfilling the law of God, while satisfying its just demands, that the blood of Jesus has such wonderful power. It is the blood of Atonement, and hence has such efficacy to redeem; accomplishing everything for, and in, the sinner, that is necessary to salvation.

II. Our second question is-WHAT HAS THAT POWER ACCOMPLISHED?

As we see something of the wonders that power has accomplished, we shall be encouraged to believe that it can do the same for us. Our best plan is to note how the Scriptures glory in the great things which have taken place through the power of the blood of Jesus.

i. THE BLOOD OF JESUS HAS OPENED THE GRAVE.

We read in Hebrews xiii. 20 "Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus that great Shepherd of the sheep, THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT."

It was through the virtue of the blood, that God raised up Jesus from the dead. God's almighty power was not exerted to raise Jesus from the dead, apart from the blood.

He came to earth as surety, and bearer, of the sin of mankind. It was through the shedding of His blood alone that He had the right, as man, to rise again, and to obtain eternal life through resurrection. His blood had satisfied the law and righteousness of God. By so doing He had overcome the power of sin, and brought it to naught. So, also, death was defeated, as its sting, sin, had been removed, and the devil also was defeated, who had the power of death, having now lost all right over Him and us. His blood had destroyed the power of death, the devil and hell--THE BLOOD OF JESUS HAS OPENED THE GRAVE. He who truly believes that, perceives the close connection which exists between the blood and the almighty power of God. It is only through the blood that God exerts His almightiness in dealing with sinful men. Where the blood is, there the resurrection power of God gives entrance into eternal life. The blood has made a complete end of all the power of death, and hell ; its effects surpass all human thought.

ii. Again THE BLOOD OF JESUS HAS OPENED HEAVEN.

We read in Hebrews ix. 22, Christ "by His own blood entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."

We know that in the Old Testament Tabernacle God's manifested presence was inside the veil. No power of man could remove that veil. The High Priest alone could enter there, but only with blood, or the loss of his own life. That was a picture of the power of sin in the flesh, which separates us from God. The eternal righteousness of God guarded the entrance to the Most Holy Place, that no flesh might approach Him.

But now our Lord appears, not in a material but in the true Temple. As High Priest and representative of His People, He asks for Himself, and for sinful children of Adam, an entrance into the presence of the Holy One. "That where I am, there they may be also" is His request. He asks that heaven may be opened for each one, even for the greatest sinner, who believes in Him. His request is granted. But how is that? It is through the BLOOD. He entered THROUGH HIS OWN BLOOD. THE BLOOD OF JESUS HAS OPENED HEAVEN.

So it is ever, and always, through the blood that the throne of grace remains settled in heaven. In the midst of the seven great realities of heaven (Heb. xii. 22, 24), yes, nearest to God the judge of all, and to Jesus the Mediator, the Holy Spirit gives a prominent place to "THE BLOOD OF SPRINKLING."

It is the constant "speaking" of that blood that keeps heaven open for sinners, and sends streams of blessing down on earth. It is through that blood that Jesus, as Mediator, carries on, without ceasing, His mediatorial work. The Throne of grace owes its existence ever, and always, to the power of that blood.

Oh, the wonderful power of the blood of Christ 1 Just as it has broken open the gates of the grave, and of hell, to let Jesus out, and us with Him; so it has opened the gates of heaven for Him, and us with Him, to enter. The blood

has an almighty power over the kingdom of darkness, and hell beneath; and over the kingdom of heaven, and its glory above.

iii. THE BLOOD OF JESUS IS ALL POWERFUL IN THE HUMAN HEART.

Since it avails so powerfully with God and over Satan, does it not avail even more powerfully with man, for whose sake it was actually shed ?

We may be sure of it.

The wonderful power of the blood is especially manifested on behalf of sinners on earth. Our text is but one out of many places in Scripture where this is emphasised. "Ye were redeemed from your vain conversation with the precious blood of Christ" (I Pet. 1. 18, 19).

The word REDEEMED has a depth of meaning. It indicates particularly deliverance from slavery, by emancipation or purchase. The sinner is enslaved, under the hostile power of Satan, the curse of the Law, and sin. Now it is proclaimed "ye are redeemed through the blood," which had paid the debt of guilt, and destroyed the power of Satan, the curse, and sin.

Where this proclamation is heard and received, there Redemption begins, in a true deliverance from a vain manner of life, from a life of sin. The word "REDEMPTION" includes everything God does for a sinner from the pardon of sin, in which it begins (Eph. i. 14; iv. 30) to the full deliverances of the body by Resurrection (Rom. viii. 24).

Those to whom Peter wrote (r Pet. i. 2) were "Elect -to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." It was the proclamation about the precious blood that had touched their hearts, and brought them to repentance; awakening faith in them, and filling their souls with life and joy. Each believer was an illustration of the wonderful power of the blood.

Further on, when Peter exhorts them to holiness, it is still the precious blood which is his plea. On that he would fix their eyes.

For the Jew, in his self-righteousness, and hatred of Christ; for the heathen, in his godliness, there was only one means of deliverance from the power of sin. It is still the one power that effects daily deliverance for sinners. How could it be otherwise? The blood that availed so powerfully in heaven and over hell, IS ALL-POWERFUL ALSO IN A SINNER'S HEART. It is impossible for us to think too highly, or to expect too much, from the power of Jesus' blood.

III. How DOES THIS Power WORK? This is our third question.

In what conditions, under what circumstances, can that power secure, unhindered, in us, the mighty results it is intended to produce:

i. The first answer is, that just as it is everywhere in the kingdom of God, IT IS THROUGH FAITH.

But faith is largely dependent on knowledge. If knowledge of what the blood can accomplish is imperfect, faith

expects little, and the more powerful effects of the blood are impossible. Many Christians think that if now, through faith in the blood, they have received the assurance of the pardon of their sins, they have a sufficient knowledge of its effects.

They have no idea that the words of God, like God Himself, are inexhaustible, that they have a wealth of meaning and blessing that surpasses all understanding.

They do not remember that when the Holy Spirit speaks of cleansing through the blood, such words are only the imperfect human expressions of the effects and experiences by which the blood, in an unspeakably glorious manner, will reveal its heavenly life-giving power to the soul.

Feeble conceptions of its power prevent the deeper, and more perfect manifestations of its effects.

As we seek to find out what the Scripture teaches about the blood, we shall see, that faith in the blood, even as we now understand it, can produce in us greater results than we have yet known, and in future, a ceaseless blessing may be ours.

Our faith may be strengthened by noticing what the blood has already accomplished. Heaven and hell bear witness to that. Faith will grow by exercising confidence in the fathomless fulness of the promises of God. Let us heartily expect that as we enter more deeply into the fountain, its cleansing, quickening, lifegiving power, will be revealed more blessedly.

We know that in bathing we enter into the most intimate relationship with the water, giving ourselves up to its cleansing effects. The blood of Jesus is described as a "fountain opened for sin and uncleanness" (Zech. xiii, i). By the power of the Holy Spirit it streams through the heavenly Temple. By faith I place myself in closest touch with this heavenly stream, I yield myself to it, I let it cover me, and go through me. I bathe in the fountain. It cannot withhold its cleansing and strengthening power. I must in simple faith turn away from what is seen, to plunge into that spiritual fountain, which represents the Saviour's blood, with the assurance that it will manifest its blessed power in me.

So let us with childlike, persevering, expectant faith, open our souls to an ever increasing experience of the wonderful power of the blood.

ii. But there is still another reply to the question as to what else is necessary, that the blood may manifest its power.

Scripture connects the blood most closely with the Spirit. It is only where the Spirit works that the power of the blood will be manifested.

THE SPIRIT AND THE BLOOD.

We read in St. John that "there are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, and the water and the blood; and these three are one" (i John v. 8). The water refers to baptism unto repentance and the laying aside of sin. The blood witnesses to redemption in Christ. The Spirit is He who supplies power to the water and the blood. So also the Spirit and the blood are associated in Hebrews ix. 14, where we read, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience." It was by the

eternal Spirit in our Lord, that His blood had its value and power.

It is always through the Spirit that the blood possesses its living power in heaven, and in the hearts of men.

The blood and the Spirit ever bear testimony together. Where the blood is honoured in faith or preaching, there the Spirit works; and where He works He always leads souls to the blood. The Holy Spirit could not be given till the blood was shed. The living bond between the Spirit and the blood cannot be broken.

It should be seriously noticed, that if the full power of the blood is to be manifested in our souls, we must place ourselves under the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

We must firmly believe that He is in us, carrying on His work in our hearts. We must live as those who know that the Spirit of God really dwells within, as a seed of life, and He will bring to perfection the hidden, powerful effects, of the blood. We must allow Him to lead us.

Through the Spirit the blood will cleanse, sanctify and unite us to God.

When the Apostle desired to arouse believers to hearken to God's voice, with His call to holiness, "Be ye holy, for I am holy," he reminded them that they had been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.

KNOWLEDGE NECESSARY.

They must know that they have been redeemed, and what that redemption signified, but they must above all know that "it was not by corruptible things such as silver and gold," things in which there was no power of life, "but by the precious blood of Christ."

To have a correct perception of what the preciousness of that blood was, as the power of a perfect redemption, would be to them the power of a new and holy life.

Beloved Christians, that statement concerns us also. We must know that we are redeemed by the precious blood. We must know about redemption and the blood before we can experience its power

In proportion as we more fully understand what redemption is, and what the power and preciousness of the blood are, by which redemption has been obtained, we shall the more fully experience its value.

Let us betake ourselves to the School of the Holy Spirit to be led into a deeper knowledge of redemption through the precious blood.

NEED AND DESIRE.

Two things are needful for this.

First: a deeper sense of need, and a desire to understand the blood better. The blood has been shed to take away sin. The power of the blood is to bring to naught the power of sin.

We are, alas, too easily satisfied with the first beginnings of deliverance from sin.

Oh, that what remains of sin in us might become unbearable to us!

May we no longer be contented with the fact that we, as redeemed ones, sin against God's will in so many things.

May the desire for holiness become stronger in us. Should not the thought that the blood has more power than we know of, and can do for us greater things than we have yet experienced, cause our hearts to go out in strong desire? If there were more desire for deliverance from sin; for holiness and intimate friendship with a Holy God; it would be the first thing that is needful for being led further into the knowledge of what the blood can do.

EXPECTATION.

The second thing will follow.

Desire must become expectation.

As we inquire from the Word, in faith, what the blood has accomplished, it must be a settled matter with us, that the blood can manifest its full power also in us. No sense of unworthiness, or of ignorance, or of helplessness must cause us to doubt. The blood works .in the surrendered soul with a ceaseless power of life.

Surrender yourself to God the Holy Spirit. Fix the eyes of your heart on the blood.

Open your whole inner being to its power.

The blood on which the Throne of Grace in heaven is founded, can make your heart the temple and throne of God.

Shelter under the ever-continuing sprinkling of the blood.

Ask the Lamb of God Himself to make the blood efficacious in you.

You will surely experience that there is nothing to compare with the wonder-working power of the blood of Jesus.

The Power of the Blood

by Andrew Murray

CHAPTER 3

Reconciliation Through the Blood

" Being justified freely by his grace through the REDEMPTION that is in Christ Jesus, whom God bath set forth as a PROPITIATION through faith in his blood."--- iii. 24,25.

As we have seen, several distinct blessings have been procured for us by the power of the blood of Jesus, which are all included in the one word " REDEMPTION." Among these blessings, RECONCILIATION takes the first place. " God hath set

forth Jesus as a RECONCILIATION through faith in his blood." In our Lord's work of REDEMPTION, RECONCILIATION naturally comes first. It stands first also among the things the sinner has to do, who desires to have a share in REDEMPTION. Through it, a participation in the other blessings of Redemption is made possible.

It is of great importance also, that the believer, who has already received RECONCILIATION, should obtain a deeper, and more spiritual conception of its meaning, and blessedness. If the power of the blood in REDEMPTION is rooted in RECONCILIATION, then a fuller knowledge of what RECONCILIATION is, is the surest way to obtain a fuller experience of the

power of the blood. The heart that is surrendered to the teaching of the Holy Spirit will surely learn what RECONCILIATION means. May our hearts be opened wide to receive it.

To understand what RECONCILIATION BY THE BLOOD means let us consider:

1. SIN, WHICH HAS MADE RECONCILIATION NECESSARY.

2. GOD'S HOLINESS WHICH FORE-ORDAINED IT;

3. THE BLOOD OF JESUS WHICH OBTAINED IT;

4. THE PARDON WHICH RESULTS FROM IT.

I. SIN, WHICH MADE RECONCILIATION NECESSARY.

In all the work of Christ, and above all in RECONCILIATION, God's object is the removal and destruction of sin. Knowledge of sin is necessary for the knowledge of RECONCILIATION.

We want to understand what there is in sin that needs RECONCILIATION, and how RECONCILIATION renders sin powerless. Then faith will have something to take hold of, and the experience of that blessing is made

possible.

Sin has had a twofold effect. It has had an effect on God, as well as on man. We emphasise generally its effect on man. But the effect it has exercised on God is more terrible and serious. It is because of its effect on God that sin has its power over us. God, as Lord of all, could not overlook sin. It is His unalterable law that sin must bring forth sorrow and death. When man fell into sin, he, by that law of God, was brought under the power of sin. So it is with the lain of God that REDEMPTION must begin, for if sin is powerless against God, and the law of God gives sin no authority over us, then its power over us is destroyed. The knowledge that sin is speechless before God, assures us that it has no longer authority over us.

What then was the, effect of sin upon God? In His divine nature, He ever remains unchanged, and unchangeable, but in His relationship and bearing towards man, an entire change has taken place. Sin is disobedience, a contempt of the authority of God; it seeks to rob God of His honour, as God and Lord. Sin is determined opposition to a Holy God. It not only can, but must awaken His wrath.

While it was God's desire to continue in love and friendship with man, sin has compelled Him to become an opponent. Although the love of God towards man remains unchanged, sin made it impossible for Him to admit man into fellowship with Himself. It has compelled Him to pour out upon man His wrath, and curse, and punishment, instead of His love. The change which sin has caused in God's relationship to man is awful.

Man is guilty before God. Guilt is debt. We know what debt is. It is something that one person can demand from another, a claim which must be met and settled.

When sin is committed its after-effects may not be noticed, but its guilt remains. The sinner is guilty. God cannot disregard His own demand that sin must be punished; and His glory, which has been dishonoured, must be upheld. As long as the debt is not discharged, or the guilt expiated, it is, in the nature of the case, impossible for a Holy God to allow the sinner to come into His presence.

We often think that the great question for us is, how we can be delivered from the indwelling power of sin; but that is a question of less importance than, how can we be delivered from the guilt which is heaped up before God? Can the guilt of sin be removed? Can the effect of sin upon God, in awakening His wrath, be removed ? Can sin be blotted out before God? If these things can be done, the power of sin will be broken in us also. It is only through RECONCILIATION that the guilt of sin can be removed.

The word translated "RECONCILIATION" means actually "to cover." Even heathen people had an idea of this. But in Israel God revealed a RECONCILIATION which could so truly cover and remove the guilt of sin, that the original relationship between God and man can be entirely restored. This is what true RECONCILIATION must do. It must so remove the guilt of sin, that is, the effect of sin on God, that man can draw near to God, in the blessed assurance that there is not any longer the least guilt resting on him to keep him away from God.

2. THE HOLINESS OF GOD WHICH FORE ORDAINED THE RECONCILIATION.

This must also be considered if we are to understand RECONCILIATION aright.

God's Holiness is His infinite, glorious perfection, which leads Him always to desire what is good in others as well as in Himself. He bestows, and works out what is good in others, and hates and condemns all that is opposed

to what is good.

In His holiness both the LOVE and WRATH of God are united; His LOVE which bestows itself; HIS WRATH which, according to the divine law of righteousness, casts out and consumes what is evil.

It is, as the Holy One, that God ordained RECONCILIATION in Israel, and took up His abode on the Mercy Seat.

It is as the Holy One that He, in expectation of New Testament times, said so often, " I am thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel."

It is as the Holy One that God wrought out His counsel of RECONCILIATION in Christ.

The wonder of this counsel is, that both the holy love and the holy wrath of God find satisfaction in it. Apparently they were in irreconcilable strife with one another. The holy love was unwilling to let man go. Notwithstanding all his sin, it could not give him up. He must be redeemed. The holy wrath could not surrender its demands. The law had been despised. God had been dishonoured. God's right must be upheld. There could be no thought of releasing the sinner as long as the law was not satisfied. The terrible effect of sin in heaven-on God, must be counteracted; the guilt of sin must be removed ; otherwise the sinner could not be delivered. The only solution possible was RECONCILIATION.

We have seen that RECONCILIATION means COVERING. It means that something else has taken the place where sin was established, so that sin can no longer be seen by God.

But because God is the Holy One, and His eyes as a flame of fire, that which covered sin must be something of such a nature that it really counteracted the evil that sin had done, and also that it so blotted out sin before God that it was really destroyed, and was not now to be seen.

RECONCILIATION for sin can take place only by satisfaction. Satisfaction is RECONCILIATION. And as satisfaction is through a substitute, sin can be punished, and the sinner saved. God's holiness also would be glorified, and its demands met, as well as the demand of God's love in the redemption of the sinner; and the demand of His righteousness in the maintenance of the glory of God and of His law.

We know how this was set forth in the Old Testament laws of the offerings. A clean beast took the place of a guilty man. His sin was laid, by confession, on the head of the victim, which bore the punishment by surrendering its life unto death. Then the blood, representing a clean life that now through the bearing of punishment is free from guilt, can be brought into God's presence ; the blood or life of the beast that has borne the punishment in place of the sinner. That blood made RECONCILIATION, and covered the sinner and his sin, because it had taken his place, and atoned for his sin.

There was RECONCILIATION IN THE BLOOD.

But that was not a reality. The blood of cattle or of goats could never take away sin; it was only a shadow, a picture, of the real RECONCILIATION.

Blood of a totally different character was necessary for an effectual covering of guilt. According to the counsel of the Holy God, nothing less than the blood of God's own Son could bring about RECONCILIATION.

Righteousness demanded it; Love offered it. " Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus whom God hath set forth for a RECONCILIATION through faith in his blood."

3. THE BLOOD THAT WROUGHT OUT THE RECONCILIATION.

RECONCILIATION must be the satisfaction of the demands of God's holy law.

The Lord Jesus accomplished that. By a willing, and perfect obedience, He fulfilled the law under which He had placed Himself. In the same spirit of complete surrender to the will of the Father, He bore the curse which the law had pronounced against sin. He rendered, in fullest measure of obedience or punishment, all that the law of God could ever ask or desire. The law was perfectly satisfied by Him. But how can His fulfilling of the demands of the law be RECONCILIATION for the sins of others? Because, both in Creation and in the holy covenant of grace that the Father had made with Him, He was recognised as the head of the human race. Because of this, He was able, by becoming flesh, to become a second Adam. When He, the WORD, became FLESH, He placed Himself in a real fellowship with our flesh which was under the power of sin, and He assumed the responsibility for all that sin had done in the flesh against God. His obedience and perfection was not merely that of one man among others, but that of Him who had placed Himself in fellowship with all other men, and who had taken their sin upon Himself.

As Head of mankind through Creation, as their representative in the Covenant, He became their surety. As a perfect satisfaction of the demands of the law was accomplished by the shedding of His blood, this was THE RECONCILIATION; the covering of our sin.

Above all, we must never forget that He was God. This bestowed a divine power on Him, to unite Himself with His creatures, and to take them up into Himself. It bestowed on His sufferings a virtue of infinite holiness and power. It made the merit of His blood-shedding more than sufficient to deal with all the guilt of human sin. It made His blood such a real RECONCILIATION, such a perfect covering of sin, that the holiness of God no longer beholds it. It has been, in truth, blotted out. The Blood of Jesus, God's Son, has procured a real, perfect and eternal RECONCILIATION.

What does that mean?

We have spoken of the awful effect of sin on God, of the terrible change which took place in heaven, through sin. Instead of favour, and friendship, and blessing, and the life of God, from Heaven, man had nothing to look for except wrath, and curse, and death, and perdition. He could think of God only with fear and terror; without hope, and without love. Sin never ceased to call for vengeance, guilt must be dealt with in full.

But see the blood of Jesus, God's Son, has been shed. Atonement for sin has been made. Peace is restored. A change has taken place again, as real and widespread as that which sin had brought about. For those who receive the RECONCILIATION, sin has been brought to naught. The wrath of God turns round and hides itself in the depth of divine love.

The Righteousness of God no longer terrifies man. It meets him as a friend, with an offer of complete justification. God's countenance beams with pleasure and approval as the penitent sinner draws near to Him, and He invites him to intimate fellowship. He opens for him treasure of blessing. There is nothing now that can separate him from God.

The RECONCILIATION through the blood of Jesus has covered his sins ; they appear no longer in God's sight. He no longer imputes sin. RECONCILIATION has wrought out a perfect and eternal redemption.

Oh 1 who can tell the worth of that precious blood?

It is no wonder that for ever mention will be made of that blood in the song of the redeemed, and through all eternity, as long as heaven lasts, the praise of the blood will resound. " Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood."

But here is the wonder, that the redeemed on earth do not more heartily join in that song, and that they are not abounding in praise for the RECONCILIATION that the power of the Blood has accomplished.

4. THE PARDON WHICH FOLLOWS FROM RECONCILIATION.

That the blood has made RECONCILIATION for sin, and covered it, and that as a result of this such a wonderful change has taken place in the heavenly realms -all this will avail us nothing, unless we obtain a personal share in it.

It is in the pardon of sin this takes place.

God has offered a perfect acquittal from all our sin and guilt. Because RECONCILIATION has been made for sin, we can now be RECONCILED to Him. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Following this word of RECONCILIATION is the invitation, "Be ye reconciled to God." Whoever receives RECONCILIATION for sin, is RECONCILED to God. He knows that all his sins are forgiven.

The Scriptures use sundry illustrations to emphasise the fulness of forgiveness, and to convince the fearful heart of the sinner, that the blood has really taken his sin away. "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins" (Isa. xliv. 22). "Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back" (Isa. xxxviii. 17). "Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Mic. vii. i9). "The iniquity of Israel shall be sought for and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah and they shall not be found for I will pardon them" (Jer. 1. 20).

This is what the New Testament calls justification. It is thus named in Rom. iii. 23-26, "For all have sinned . . . being justified freely (for nothing) through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth as a RECONCILIATION, THROUGH FAITH IN HIS BLOOD, to declare his righteousness . . . that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

So perfect is the RECONCILIATION and so really has sin been covered and blotted out, that he who believes in Christ is looked upon, and treated by God, as entirely righteous. The acquittal which he has received from God is so complete that there is nothing, absolutely nothing, to prevent him approaching God with the utmost freedom.

For the enjoyment of this blessedness nothing is necessary save faith in the blood. The blood alone has clone everything.

The penitent sinner who turns from his sin to God, needs only faith in that blood. That is, faith in the power of the

blood, that it has truly atoned for sin, and that it really has atoned for him. Through that faith, he knows that he is fully RECONCILED to God, and that there is now not the least thing to hinder God pouring out on him the fulness of His love, and blessing.

If he looks towards heaven which formerly was covered with clouds, black with God's wrath, and a coming awful judgment; that cloud is no longer to be seen, everything is bright in the gladsome light of God's face, and God's love. Faith in the blood manifests in his heart the same wonder-working power that it exercised in heaven. Through faith in the blood he becomes partaker of all the blessings which the blood has obtained for him, from God.

Fellow believers ! pray earnestly that the Holy Spirit may reveal to you the glory of this RECONCILIATION, and the pardon of your sins, made yours through the blood of Jesus. Pray for enlightened hearts to see how completely the accusing and condemning power of your sin has been removed, and how God in the fulness of His love and good pleasure has turned towards you. Open your hearts to the Holy Spirit that He may reveal in you the glorious effects which the blood has had in heaven. God hath set forth JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF as a RECONCILIATION through faith in His blood. He is the RECONCILIATION for our sins. Rely on Him, as having already covered your sin before God. Set Him between yourselves and your sins, and you will experience how complete the Redemption is, which He has accomplished, and how powerful the RECONCILIAT10N is through faith in His blood.

Then through the LIVING CHRIST, the powerful effects which the blood has exercised in heaven will increasingly be manifested in your hearts, and you will know what it means to walk, by the Spirit's grace, in the full light and enjoyment of forgiveness.

And you who have not yet obtained forgiveness of your sins, does not this word come to you as an urgent call to faith in His blood ?

Will you never allow yourselves to be moved by what God has done for you as sinners? "Herein is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the reconciliation for our sins" (I John iv. 20).

The precious blood, divine, has been shed, RECONCILIATION is complete, and the message comes to you, "Be ye reconciled to God."

If you repent of your sins, and desire to be delivered from sin's power and bondage, exercise faith in the blood. Open your heart to the influence of the word that God has sent to be spoken unto you. Open your heart to the message, that the blood can deliver you, yes, even you, this moment. Only believe it. Say "that blood is also for me." If you come as a guilty, lost sinner, longing for pardon, you may rest assured that the blood which has already made a perfect RECONCILIATION covers your sin and restores you, immediately, to the favour and love of GOD.

So I pray you, exercise faith in the blood. This moment bow down before God, and tell Him that you do believe in the power of the blood for your own soul. Having said that, stand by it, cling to it. Through faith in His blood, Jesus Christ will be the RECONCILIATION for your sins also.

The Power of the Blood

by Andrew Murray

CHAPTER IV

Cleansing Through the Blood

"If ye walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"-I John i. 7

WE have already seen that the most important effect of the Blood is RECONCILIATION for sin.

The fruit of knowledge about, and faith in RECONCILIATION, is the PARDON of sin. Pardon is just a declaration of what has already taken place in heaven on the sinner's behalf, and his hearty acceptance of it.

This first effect of the Blood is not the only one. In proportion as the soul, through faith, yields itself to the Spirit of God to understand and enjoy the full power of RECONCILIATION, the Blood exerts a further power, in the imparting of the other blessings which, in Scripture, are attributed to it.

One of the first results of RECONCILIATION is CLEANSING FROM SIN. Let us see what God's Word has to say about this. CLEANSING is often spoken about, among us, as if it were no more than the pardon of sins, or the cleansing from guilt. This, however, is not so. Scripture does not speak of being CLEANSED FROM GUILT. CLEANSING from sin means deliverance from the pollution, not from the guilt of sin. The guilt of sin concerns our relationship to God, and our responsibility to make good our misdoings,-or to bear the punishment of them. The pollution of sin, on the other hand, is the sense of defilement and impurity, which sin brings to our inner being, and it is with this that CLEANSING has to do.

It is of the greatest importance for every believer who desires to enjoy the full salvation which God has provided for him, to understand aright what the Scriptures teach about this CLEANSING.

Let us consider :

I. WHAT THE WORD CLEANSING MEANS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT?

II. WHAT IS THE BLESSING INDICATED BY THAT WORD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

III. HOW MAY WE EXPERIENCE THE FULL ENJOYMENT OF THIS BLESSING?

I. CLEANSING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

In the service of God as ordained by the hand of Moses for Israel, there were two ceremonies to be observed by God's people in preparation for approach to Him. These were the OFFERINGS or SACRIFICES and the CLEANSINGS or PURIFICATIONS. Both were to be observed but in different manners. Both were intended to remind man how sinful he was, and how unfit to draw near to a holy God. Both were to typify the

REDEMPTION by which the Lord Jesus Christ would restore to man fellowship with God. As a rule it is only the OFFERINGS which are regarded as typical of REDEMPTION through Christ. The Epistle to the Hebrews, however, emphatically mentions THE CLEANSINGS as figures "for the time being in which were oflered SACRIFICES and DIVERS WASHINGS" (Heb. ix. 9, 10).

If we can imagine the life of an Israelite we shall understand that the consciousness of sin, and the need for REDEMPTION, were awakened not less by the CLEANSINGS than the OFFERINGS.

We must also learn from them what the power of the Blood of Jesus actually is.

We may take one of the more important cases of CLEANSING as an illustration. If anyone was in a hut or house where a dead body lay, or if he had even touched a dead body, or bones-he was unclean for seven days. Death, as the punishment for sin, made everyone who came into association with it unclean. CLEANSING was accomplished by using the ashes of a young heifer which had been burned, as described in Numbers xix. (Compare Heb. ix. 13, I4.) These ashes, mixed with water, were sprinkled by means of a bunch of hyssop on the one who was unclean; he had then to bathe himself in water, after which he was once more ceremonially clean.

The words "UNCLEAN," "CLEANSING," "CLEAN," were used in reference to the healing of leprosy, a disease which might be described as a living death. L eviticus, chapters xiii and xiv : Here also he who was to be CLEANSED must bathe in water, having been first sprinkled with water, in which the blood of a bird, sacrificially offered, had been mixed. Seven days later he was again sprinkled with sacrificial blood.

An attentive contemplation of the laws of CLEANSING will teach us that the difference between THE CLEANSINGS and THE OFFERINGS was twofold. First: the OFFERING had definite reference to the transgression for which RECONCILIATION had to be made. CLEANSING bad more to do with conditions which were not sinful in themselves, but were the result of sin, and therefore must be acknowledged by God's holy people as defiled. Secondly: In the case of the OFFERING, nothing was done to the offerer himself. He saw the blood sprinkled on the altar or carried into the Holy Place; he must believe that this procures RECONCILIATION before God. But nothing was done to himself. In CLEANSING, on the other hand, what happened to the person was the chief thing. Defilement was something that either through internal disease, or outward touch, had come upon the man ; so the washing or sprinkling with water must take place on himself as ordained by God.

CLEANSING was something that he could feel and experience. It brought about a change not only in his relationship to God, but in his own condition. In the OFFERING something was done FOR him; by CLEANSING something was done IN him. The OFFERING had respect to his guilt. The CLEANSING to the pollution of sin.

The same meaning of the words "CLEAN," "CLEANSING," is found elsewhere in the Old Testament. David prays in Psalm li, "CLEANSE me from my sin," "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be CLEAN." The word used by David here is that which is used most frequently for the CLEANSING of anyone who had touched a dead body. Hyssop also was used in such cases. David prayed for more than pardon. He confessed that he had been "shapen in iniquity," that his nature was sinful. He prayed that he might be made pure within. "CLEANSE me from my sin," was his prayer. He uses the same word later on when he prays, "Create in me a CLEAN heart, O God." CLEANSING is more than pardon.

In the same manner this word is used by Ezekiel, and refers to an inner condition which must be changed. This is

evident from chapter xxiv. 11,13, where, speaking of uncleanness being melted out, God says "Because I have purged thee and thou wast not purged." Later on, speaking of the New Covenant (chap. xxxvi. z5), He says, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be CLEAN: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I CLEANSE you."

MALACHI uses the same word, connecting it with fire (chap. iii. 3), "HE shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, he shall purify (CLEANSE) the sons of Levi."

CLEANSING by water; by blood; by fire; all typical of the CLEANSING which would take place under the New Covenant-an inner CLEANSING and deliverance from the stain of sin.

II. THE BLESSING INDICATED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT BY CLEANSING.

Mention is often made in the New Testament of a clean or pure heart. Our Lord said, " Blessed are the PURE in heart" (Matt. v. 8). Paul speaks of "love out of a PURE heart" (I Tim. i. 5). He speaks also of a "PURE conscience."

Peter exhorts his readers to "love one another with a PURE heart fervently." The word CLEANSING is also used.

We read of those who are described as God's people that God purified (CLEANSED) their hearts through faith (Acts xv. 9).

That the purpose of the Lord Jesus concerning those who were His was "to purify (CLEANSE) to himself a people of his own possession" (Titus ii. i4).

As regards ourselves we read "Let us CLEANSE ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit" (z Cor. vii. i).

All these places teach us that CLEANSING is an inward word wrought in the heart, and that it is subsequent to pardon.

We are told in i John i. 7 that " the blood of Jesus Christ his Son CLEANSETH us from all sin."This word CLEANSETH does not refer to the grace of PARDON received at conversion; but to the effect of grace IN God's children who walk in the light. We read, "If we walk in the light as he is in the light . . . the blood of Jesus Christ his Son CLEANSETH us from all sin." That it refers to something more than pardon appears from what follows in verse 9 :-"He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to CLEANSE us from all unrighteousness." Cleansing is something that comes after pardon and is the result of it, by the inward and experimental reception of the power of the blood of Jesus in the heart of the believer.

This takes place according to the Word, first in the purifying of the conscience. "How much more shall the blood of Christ . . . PURGE your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. ix. 14). The mention already made of the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean typifies a personal experience of the precious blood of Christ. Conscience is not only a judge to give sentence on our actions, it is also the inward voice which bears witness to our relationship to God, and to God's relationship to us. When it is CLEANSED by the blood then it bears witness that we are well pleasing to God. It is written in Hebrews x. 2, "The worshippers once PURGED should have no more conscience of sins." We receive through the Spirit an inward experience that the blood has so fully delivered us from the guilt and power of sin that we, in our regenerated nature, have escaped entirely

from its dominion. Sin still dwells in our flesh, with its temptations, but it has no power to rule. The conscience is CLEANSED, there is no need for the least shadow of separation between God and us; we look up to Him in the full power of REDEMPTION. The conscience CLEANSED by the blood bears witness to nothing less than a complete redemption; the fulness of God's good-pleasure.

And if the conscience is CLEANSED so also is the HEART, of which the conscience is the centre. We read of having the heart CLEANSED from an evil conscience (Heb. x. 22). Not only must the conscience be CLEANSED but the heart also must be CLEANSED, including the understanding, and the will, with all our thoughts and desires. Through the blood, by the shedding of which Christ delivered Himself up to death, and by virtue of which He entered again into heaven, the death and resurrection of Christ are ceaselessly effectual. By this power of His death and resurrection, sinful lusts, and dispositions, are slain.

"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," from original, as well as from actual sin. The blood exercises its spiritual, heavenly power in the soul. The believer in whose life the blood is fully efficacious, experiences that the old nature is hindered from manifesting its power. Through the blood, its lusts and desires are subdued and slain, and everything is so CLEANSED that the Spirit can bring forth His glorious fruit. In case of the least stumbling, the soul finds immediate CLEANSING and restoration. Even unconscious sins are rendered powerless through its efficacy.

We have noted a difference between the guilt and the pollution of sin. This is of importance for a clear understanding of the matter ; but in actual life we must ever remember that they are not thus divided. God through the blood deals with sin as a whole, Every true operation of the blood manifests its power simultaneously over the guilt and the pollution of sin. Reconciliation and cleansing always go together, and the blood is ceaselessly operative.

Many seem to think that the blood is there, so that if we have sinned again, we can turn again to it to be cleansed. But this is not so. Just as a fountain flows always, and always purifies what is placed in it or under its stream, so it is with this Fountain, opened for sin and uncleanness (Zech. xiii. i). The eternal power of life of the Eternal Spirit works through the blood. Through Him the heart can abide always under the flow, and CLEANSING of the Blood.

In the Old Testament CLEANSING was necessary for each sin. In the New Testament CLEANSING depends on Him who ever lives to intercede. When faith sees and desires and lays hold of this fact, the heart can abide every moment under the protecting and CLEANSING tower of the blood.

III. HOW MAY WE EXPERIENCE THE FULL ENJOYMENT OF THIS BLESSING?

Everyone who through faith obtains a share in the atoning merit of the blood of Christ, has a share also in its CLEANSING efficacy. But the experience of its power to cleanse, is, for several reasons, sadly imperfect. It is therefore of great importance to understand what the conditions are for the full enjoyment of this glorious blessing.

i. First of all knowledge is necessary. Many think that pardon of sin is all that we receive through the blood. They ask for and so obtain nothing more.

It is a blessed thing to begin to see that the Holy Spirit of God has a special purpose in making use of different words in Scripture concerning the effects of the blood. Then we begin to inquire about their special meaning. Let

everyone who truly longs to know what the Lord desires to teach us by this one word CLEANSING, attentively compare all the places in Scripture where the word is used, where CLEANSING is spoken o£ He will soon feel that there is more promised to the believer than the removal of guilt. He will begin to understand that CLEANSING through washing can take away stain, and although he cannot fully explain in what way this takes place, he will, however, be convinced that he may expect a blessed inward operation of the CLEANSING away of the effects of sin, by the blood. Knowledge of this FACT is the first condition of experiencing it.

ii. Secondly:-There must be desire.

It is to be feared that our Christianity is only too pleased to postpone to a future life the experience of the Beatitude which our Lord intended for our earthly life:-"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

It is not sufficiently recognised that PURITY OF HEART is a characteristic of every child of God, because it is the necessary condition of fellowship with Him, of the enjoyment of His salvation. There is too little inner longing to be really in all things, at all times, well pleasing to the Lord. Sin and the stain of sin trouble us too little.

God's Word comes to us with the promise of blessing which ought to awaken all our desires. Believe that the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin. If you learn how to yield yourself up aright to its operation it can do great things in you. Should you not every hour desire to experience its glorious cleansing efficacy F to be preserved, in spite of your depraved nature, from the many stains for which your conscience is constantly accusing you ? May your desires be awakened to long for this blessing. Put God to the test to work out in you what He as the Faithful One has promised:-CLEANSING from all unrighteousness.

iii. The third condition is a willingness to separate yourself from every thing that is unclean. Through sin everything in our nature, and in the world, is defiled. CLEANSING cannot take place where there is not an entire separation from, and giving up of everything unclean. "Touch not the unclean thing" is God's command to His chosen ones. I must recognise that all the things surrounding me are unclean.

My friends, my possessions, my spirit, must all be surrendered that I may be CLEANSED in each relationship by the precious blood, and that all the activities of my spirit, soul, and being, may experience a thorough CLEANSING.

He who will keep back anything however small cannot obtain the full blessing. He who is willing to pay the full price so as to have his whole being baptised by the bood is on the way to understand fully this word, The blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin.

iv. The last condition is exercising faith in the power of the blood. It is not as if we, through our faith, bestow its efficacy upon the blood. No, the blood ever retains its power and efficacy, but our unbelief closes our hearts, and hinders its operation, Faith is simply the removal of that hindrance, the setting open of our hearts, for the divine power by which the living Lord will bestow His blood.

Yes, let us believe that there is CLEANSING through the blood.

You have perhaps seen a spring in the midst of a patch of grass. From the much travelled road that runs by that patch, dust is constantly falling over the grass that grows by the side of the road, but where the water from the spring falls in refreshing and cleansing spray, there is no sign of dust, everything is green and fresh. So the

precious blood of Christ carries on its blessed work without ceasing in the soul of the believer, who by faith appropriates it. He who by faith commits himself to the Lord, and believes that this can and will take place, it will be given to him.

The heavenly, spiritual effect of the blood can be really experienced every moment. Its power is such that I can always abide in the fountain, always dwell in the wounds of my Lord.

Believer, come, I entreat of you, put it to the proof how the blood of Jesus can cleanse your heart from all sin.

You know with what joy a weary traveller would bathe in a fresh stream, plunging into the water to experience its cooling, and cleansing, and strengthening effect. Lift up your eyes and see by faith how ceaselessly a stream flows from heaven above to earth beneath. It is the blessed Spirit's influence, through whom the power of the blood of Jesus flows earthwards over souls, to heal and to purify them. Oh! place yourself in this stream, simply believe that the words, "The blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin," have a divine meaning, deeper, wider, than you have ever imagined. Believe that it is the Lord Jesus Himself who will cleanse you in His blood, and fulfil His promise in power in you. And reckon on the cleansing from sin by His blood, as a blessing, in the daily enjoyment of which you can confidently abide.

The Power of the Blood

by Andrew Murray

CHAPTER V

Sanctification Through the Blood

"Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate"-Heb. xiii. 12.

"Cleansing through the blood" was the subject of our last chapter.

SANCTIFICATION THROUGH THE BLOOD must now occupy our attention.

To a superficial observer it might seem that there is little difference between CLEANSING and SANCTIFICATION, that the two words mean about the same thing ; but the difference is great and important.

CLEANSING has to do chiefly with the old life, and the stain of sin which must be removed, and is only preparatory.

SANCTIFICATION concerns the new life and that ,characteristic of it which must be imparted to it by God. SANCTIFICATION, which means union with God, is the peculiar fulness of blessing purchased for us by the blood.

The distinction between these two things is clearly marked in Scripture. Paul reminds us that "Christ gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it" (Eph. v. 25, R. V.). Having first CLEANSED it, then He SANCTIFIES it. Writing to Timothy he says, "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use" (2 Tim. ii. 21). SANCTIFICATION is a blessing which follows after, and surpasses CLEANSING.

It is also strikingly illustrated by the ordinances connected with the consecration of the Priests, compared with that of the Levites. In the case of the latter, who took a lower position than the Priests in the service of the Sanctuary, no mention is made of SANCTIFICATION; but the word CLEANSING is used five times (Num. viii).

In the consecration of the Priests, on the other hand, the word "to SANCTIFY" is often used; for the Priests stood in a closer relationship to God than the Levites (Exod. xxix; Lev. viii).

This record at the same time emphasises the close connection between the sacrificial blood, and SANCTIFICATION. In the case of the consecration of the Levites-RECONCILIATION for sin was made, and they were sprinkled with the water of purification for CLEANSING, but they were not sprinkled with blood. But in the consecration of the Priests, blood had to be sprinkled upon them. They were SANCTIFIED by a more personal and intimate application of the blood.

All this was typical of SANCTIFICATION through the BLOOD OF JESUS, and this is what we now seek to

understand, that we may obtain a share in it. Let us then consider :

I. WHAT SANCTIFICATION IS.

II. THAT IT WAS THE GREAT OBJECT OF THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST.

III. THAT IT CAN BE OBTAINED THROUGH THE BLOOD.

I. WHAT SANCTIFICATION IS.

To understand what the SANCTIFICATION of the redeemed is, we must first learn what the holiness of God is. He alone is the HOLY ONE. Holiness in the creature must be received from Him.

God's holiness is often spoken of as though it consisted in His hatred of, and hostility to sin; but this gives no explanation of what holiness actually is. It is a merely negative statement that God's holiness cannot bear sin.

Holiness is that attribute of God because of which He always is, and wills, and doer what is supremely good; because of which also He desires what is supremely good in His creatures, and bestows it upon them.

God is called "The Holy One" in Scripture, not only because lie punishes sin, but also because He is the Redeemer of His people. It is His holiness, which ever wills what is good for all, that moved Him to redeem sinners. Both the WRATH of God which punishes sin, and LOVE of God which redeems the sinner, spring from the same source-His holiness. Holiness is the perfection of God's nature.

Holiness in man is a disposition in entire agreement with that of God; which chooses in all things to will as God wills: as it is written:-"As he is holy, so be ye holy" (I Pet. i. 15). Holiness in us is nothing else than oneness with God. The Sanctification of God's people is effected by the communication to them of the holiness of God. There is no other way of obtaining SANCTIFICATION, save by the Holy God bestowing what He alone possesses. He alone is the HOLY ONE. He is the Lord who sanctifies.

By the different meanings which Scripture attaches to the words sanctification, and "to sanctify"-a certain relationship with God, into which we are brought, is pointed out.

The first and simplest meaning of the word SANCTIFICATION is "separation." That which is taken out of its surroundings, by God's command, and is set aside or separated as His own possession and for leis service-that is holy. This does not mean separation from sin only, but from ail that is in the world, even from what may be permissible. Thus God sanctified the seventh day. The other days were not unclean, for God saw all that He had made and "beheld it was very good." But that day alone was holy, which God had taken possession of by His own special act. In the same way God had separated Israel from other nations, and in Israel, had separated the priests, to be holy unto Him. This separation unto SANCTIFICATION is always God's own work, and so the electing grace of God is often closely connected with SANCTIFICATION. "Ye shall be holy unto me . . . I have separated you . . . that ye should be mine" (Lev. xx. 26). "The man whom the Lord shall choose shall be holy" (Num. xvi. 7). "Thou art an holy people unto the Lord, the Lord thy God hath chosen thee" (Deut. vii. 6). God cannot take part with other lords. He must be the sole possessor, and ruler, of those to whom He reveals and imparts His holiness.

But this separation is not all that is included in the word SANCTIFICATION. It is only the indispensable condition of what must follow. When separated, man stands before God in no respect differing from an object without life that has been sanctified to the service of God. If the separation is to be of value, something more must take place. Man must surrender himself willingly, and heartily, to this separation. SANCTIFICATION includes personal consecration to the Lord to be His.

SANCTIFICATION can become ours only when it sends down its roots into, and takes up its abode in the depths of our personal life; in our will, and in our love. God sanctifies no man against his will, therefore the personal, hearty, surrender to God is an indispensable part of SANCTIFICATION.

It is for this reason that the Scriptures not only speak of God sanctifying us, but they say often, that we must sanctify ourselves.

But even by consecration, true SANCTIFICATION is not yet complete. Separation and consecration are together only the preparation for the glorious work that God will do, as He imparts His own holiness to the soul. "PARTAKING OF THE DIVINE NATURE" is the blessing which is promised to believers in SANCTIFICATION. "That we might be partakers of his holiness" (Heb. xii. 10)-that is the glorious aim of God's work in those whom He separates for Himself. But this impartation of His holiness is not a gift of something that is apart from God Himself; no 1 it is in personal fellowship with Him, and partaking of His divine life, that SANCTIFICATION can be obtained.

As the Holy ONE, God dwelt among the people of Israel to sanctify his people (Exod. xxix. 45, 46). As the Holy ONE, He dwells in us. It is the presence of God alone that can sanctify. But so surely is this our portion, that Scripture does not shrink from speaking of God dwelling in our hearts in such power that we may be "filled unto all the fulness of God." True SANCTIFICATION is fellowship with God and His dwelling in us. So it was necessary that God in Christ should take up His abode in the flesh, and that the Holy Spirit should come to dwell in us. This is what SANCTIFICATION means.

Let us now notice :

II. THIS SANCTIFICATION WAS THE OBJECT FOR WHICH CHRIST SUFFERED.

This is plainly stated in Hebrews xiii. 12: "Jesus suffered that he might sanctify his people." In the wisdom of God a participation in His holiness is the highest destiny of man. Therefore, also, this was the central object of the coming of our Lord Jesus to earth; and above all, of His sufferings and death. It was "that he might sanctify his people" and "that they might be holy and without blame" (Eph. i. 4).

How the sufferings of Christ attained this end, and became our SANCTIFICATION, is made plain to us by the words which He spake to His Father, when He was about to allow Himself to be bound as a sacrifice. "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth" (John xvii. 19). It was because His sufferings and death were a SANCTIFICATION of Himself, that they can become SANCTIFICATION for us.

What does that mean? Jesus was the HOLY ONE OF GOD, "The Son whom the Father had sanctified and sent into the world," and must He sanctify Himself? He must do so; it was indispensable.

The SANCTIFICATION which He possessed was not beyond the reach of temptation. In His temptation He must

maintain it, and show how perfectly His will was surrendered to the holiness of God. We have seen that true holiness in man is the perfect oneness of His will with that of God. Through all our Lord's life, from the temptation in the wilderness onwards, He had subjected His will to the will of His Father, and had consecrated Himself as a sacrifice to God. But it was chiefly in Gethsemane He did this. There was the hour, and the power of darkness; the temptation to put away the terrible cup of wrath from His lips, and to do His own will came with almost irresistible power, but He rejected the temptation. He offered up Himself, and His will, to the will and holiness of God. He sanctified Himself, by a perfect oneness of will, with that of God. This sanctification of Himself has become the power by which we also may be sanctified through the truth. This is in perfect accord with what we learn from the Epistle to the Hebrews, where, speaking of the words used by Christ, we read, "I come to do thy will, O God," and then it is added, "By the which will we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. x. 9, 10). It was because the offering of His body was His surrender of Himself to do the will of God, that we become sanctified by that will. He sanctified Himself there, for us, that we might be sanctified through the truth. The perfect obedience in which He surrendered Himself, that God's holy will might be accomplished in Him, was not only the meritorious cause of our salvation, but is at the same time the power by which sin was for ever conquered, and by which the same disposition, and the same sanctification, may be created in our hearts.

Elsewhere in this Epistle to the Hebrews, the true relationship of our Lord to His own people is even more clearly characterised as having SANCTIFICATION for its chief end after speaking of how becoming it was, that our Lord should suffer as He did, we read:-"For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one" (Heb. ii. 11). The unity between the Lord Jesus and His people consists in the fact, that they both receive their life from one Father, and both have a share in one and the same SANCTIFICATION. Jesus is the sanctifier, they become the sanctified. SANCTIFICATION is the bond that unites them. "Therefore Jesus also suffered that he might sanctify his people with his own blood."

If we are willing to really understand, and experience what SANCTIFICATION by THE BLOOD means, then it is of the utmost importance for us, to first lay fast hold of the fact that SANCTIFICATION is the characteristic, and purpose of the entire sufferings of our Lord, of which sufferings the blood was the fruit, and means of blessing. His SANCTIFICATION of Himself has the characteristic of those sufferings, and therein lay its value and power. Our SANCTIFICATION is the purpose of those sufferings, and only to attain that purpose do they work out the perfect blessing. In proportion as this is clear to us, we shall press forward into the true meaning and blessing of His sufferings.

It was as the holy ONE that God foreordained redemption. It vas His will to glorify His holiness in victory over sin, by the sanctification of man after His own image. It was with the same object that our Lord Jesus endured, and accomplished His sufferings; we must be consecrated to God. And if the Holy Spirit, the holy God as Spirit-comes into us to reveal in us the redemption that is in Jesus, this continues to be with Him, also, the main object. As the Holy Spirit He is the spirit of holiness.

RECONCILIATION, PARDON, and CLEANSING from sin, have all an unspeakable value; they all, however, point onwards to SANCTIFICATION. It is God's will that each one who has been marked by the precious blood, should know that it is a divine mark, characterising his entire separation to God; that this blood calls him to an undivided consecration to a life, wholly for God, and that this blood is the promise, and the power of a participation in God's holiness, through which God Himself will make His abiding place in him, and be his God.

Oh, that we might understand, and believe that:

"Jesus also suffered, that he might sanctify his people, with his own blood" (Heb. xiii. 12).

III. HOW SANCTIFICATION 13Y THE BLOOD IS TO BE OBTAINED.

An answer to this question, in general, is that every one who is a partaker of the virtue of the blood, is also a partaker of SANCTIFICATION, and is in God's sight a sanctified person.

In proportion as he lives in close and abiding contact with the blood, he continues to experience, increasingly, its sanctifying effects ; even though he still understands but little of how those effects are produced. Let no one think that he must first understand how to lay hold of, or explain everything, before he may, by faith, pray that the blood might manifest its sanctifying power in him. No; it was just in connection with the bath of cleansing-the washing of the disciples' feet-that the Lord Jesus said, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." It is the Lord Jesus Himself who sanctifies His people "by His own blood." He who heartily gives himself up to believing worship of, and intercourse with, the LAMB, who has bought us with His blood, will experience through that blood a SANCTIFICATION beyond his conception. The Lord Jesus will do this for him.

But the believer ought to grow in knowledge also; thus only can he enter into the full blessing which is prepared for him. We have not only the right, but it is our duty to inquire earnestly what the essential connection is between the blessed effect of the blood, and our SANCTIFICATION, and in what way the Lord Jesus will work out in us, by His blood, those things which we have ascertained to be the chief qualities of SANCTIFICATION.

We have seen that the beginning of all SANCTIFICATION is SEPARATION to God, as His entire possession, to be at His disposal. And is not this just what the blood proclaims ?that the power of sin is broken ; that we are loosed from its bonds; that we are no longer its bond-servants; but belong to Him who purchased our freedom with His blood? "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price" this is the language in which the blood tells us that we are God's possession. Because He desires to have us entirely for Himself, He has chosen and bought us, and set upon us the distinguishing mark of the blood, as those who are separated from all around them, to live only for His service. This idea of separation is clearly expressed in the words we so often repeat, "Jesus, that he might sanctify his people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp bearing his reproach." "Going out" from all that is of this world, was the characteristic of Him who was holy, undefiled, separate from sinners; and it must be the characteristic of all His followers.

Believer, the Lord Jesus HAS SANCTIFIED you through His own blood, and He desires to make you experience, through that blood, the full power of this SANCTIFICATION. Endeavour to gain a clear impression of what has taken place in you through the sprinkling of that blood. The holy God desires to have you entirely for Himself. No one, nothing, may any longer have the least right over you, nor have you any right over yourself. God has separated you unto HIMSELF, and that you might feel this He set His mark upon you. That mark is the most wonderful thing that is to be found on earth or in heavenTHE BLOOD OF JESUS. The blood in which the life of the eternal Son of God is; the blood that on the throne of grace is ever before God's face; the blood that assures you of full redemption from the power of sin; that blood is sprinkled upon you, as a sign that you belong to God.

Believer, I pray you, let every thought about the blood awaken in you the glorious confession, "By his own blood, the Lord Jesus has sanctified me, he has taken complete possession of me for God, and I belong entirely to God."

We have seen that SANCTIFICATION is more than separation. That is only the beginning. We have seen also that personal consecration and hearty and willing surrender to live only for, and in God's holy will, is part of

SANCTIFICATION.

In what way can the blood of Christ work out this surrender in us, and SANCTIFY us in that surrender? The answer is not difficult. It is not enough to believe f611 in the power of the blood to redeem us, and to free us from sin, but we must, above all, notice the source of this power.

We know that it has this power, because of the willingness with which the Lord Jesus surrenders Himself. In the shedding of His blood He sanctifies: Himself, offered Himself entirely to God and Hi holiness. It is because of this that the blood is so holy, and possesses such sanctifying power. In the blood we have an impressive representation of the self-surrender of Christ. The blood ever speak of the consecration of Jesus to the Father, as the opening of the way, and supplying the power for victor: over sin. And the closer we come into contact with the blood, and the more we live under the deep impression of having been sprinkled by the blood, we shall hear more clearly the voice of the blood, declare that "Entire surrender to God is the way to full redemption from sin."

The voice of the blood will not speak simply teach us or to awaken thought; the blood speaks with a divine and life giving power. What it commands, that it bestows. It works out in us the same disposition that was in our Lord Jesus. By His own blood Jesus sanctifies us, that we, holding nothing back, might surrender ourselves with all our hearts to the holy will of God.

But CONSECRATION itself even along with any; following SEPARATION is still only a preparation, Entire Sanctification takes place when God takes possession of and falls with His glory the temple that is consecrated to Him. "There will I meet with the children of Israel, and they shall be sanctified by my glory" (Exod. xxix. 43j. Actual, complete SANCTIFICATION consists in God's impartation of His own holiness-of Himself.

Here also the blood speaks:-It tells us that heaven is opened, that the powers of the heavenly life have come down to earth, that every hindrance has been removed, and God can make His abode with man.

Immediate nearness and fellowship with God, are made possible by the blood. The believer who surrenders himself unreservedly to the blood, obtains the full assurance that God will bestow Himself wholly, and will reveal His holiness in him.

How glorious are the results of such a SANCTIFICATION! Through the Holy Spirit, the soul's intercourse is in the living experience of God's abiding nearness ; accompanied by the awakening of the tenderest carefulness against sin; guarded by caution and the fear of God.

But to live in watchfulness against sin does not satisfy the soul. The temple must not only be cleansed but it must be filled with God's glory. All the virtues of divine holiness, as manifested in the Lord Jesus, are to be sought for and found, in fellowship with God. Sanctification means union with God; fellowship in His will; sharing His life; conformity to His image.

Christians-"Wherefore Jesus also . . . suffered without the gate that he might sanctify his people with his own blood. Let us go forth unto him without the camp." Yes; it is He who sanctifies His people. "Let us go forth unto him." Let us trust Him to make known to us the power of the blood. Let us yield ourselves wholly to its blessed efficacy. That blood, through which He sanctified Himself, has entered heaven to open it for us. It can make our hearts also a throne of God, that the grace and glory of God may dwell in us. Yes; "let us go forth unto him without the camp." He who is willing to lose, and say farewell to everything, in order that Jesus may sanctify him,

will not fail to obtain the blessing. He who is willing at any cost to experience the full power of the precious blood, can confidently reckon that he will be sanctified by Jesus Himself, through that blood.

"The very God of peace sanctify you wholly." Amen.

The Power of the Blood

by Andrew Murray

CHAPTER VI

Cleansed by the Blood to Serve the Living God or Intercourse Through the Blood

" Now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by THE BLOOD OF CHRIST "-Eph.ii. 13.

"How much more shall THE BLOOD OF CHRIST . . . purge your conscience . . . to serve the living God? Heb. ix. 14.

AFTER our study of SANCTIFICATION through the blood, we are now to be engaged in the consideration of what the intimate INTERCOURSE WITH GOD into which we are introduced by SANCTIFICATION, involves.

SANCTIFICATION and INTERCOURSE are closely related facts in Scripture. Apart from SANCTIFICATION there can be no such INTERCOURSE. How could one who is unholy have fellowship with a holy God? On the other hand, without this INTERCOURSE there can be no growth in holiness; it is always, and only in fellowship with the Holy ONE, that holiness can be found.

The intimate connection between SANCTIFICATION and INTERCOURSE appears plainly in the story of the revolt of Nadab and Abihu. God made this the occasion of a clear statement concerning the peculiar nature of the priesthood in Israel. He said, "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me" (Lev. x. 3). Then again in the conspiracy of Korah against Moses and Aaron; Moses speaking for God said:-"To-morrow the Lord shall show who are his, and who is holy: and will cause him to come near unto him, even him whom he hath chosen, will he cause to come near unto him" (Num. xvi. 5).

We have already seen that God's election and separation unto Himself of His own, are closely bound up with SANCTIFICATION. It is evident here, also, that the glory and blessing secured by this election to holiness, is nothing else than INTERCOURSE with God. This is indeed the highest, the one perfect blessing for man, who was created for God, and to enjoy His love. The Psalmist sings:-"Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts" (Ps. lxv. 4). In the nature of the case, consecration to God, and nearness to Him are the same thing.

The sprinkling of the blood which sanctifies man unto, and takes possession of him for God bestows, at the same time, the right of INTERCOURSE.

It was thus with the priests in Israel. In the record of their consecration we read:-"And Moses brought Aaron's sons, and Moses put of the blood upon the tip of their right ear, and upon the thumbs of their right hands" (Lev. vii. 24). Those who belong to God may, and indeed MUST, live in nearness to Him; they belong to Him. This is illustrated in the case of our Lord, our Great High Priest, who "through bis own blood entered, once for all, into the holy place." It is the same with every believer, according to the Word:-"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, LET US DRAW NEAR, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil

conscience" (Heb. x. 19, 22). The word "enter," as used in this verse, is the peculiar word used of the approach of the priest to God. In the same way, in the Book of Revelation, our right to draw near as priests is declared to be by the power of the blood. We were "Redeemed from our sins by bis own blood" who "has made us kings and priests unto God . . . to him be the glory for ever" (Rev. v. 9, 10). "These are they . . . who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, therefore are they before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple" (Rev. vii. 14).

One of the most glorious blessings made possible for us by the power of the blood, is that of drawing near the throne, into the very presence of God. That we may understand what this blessing means let us consider what is contained in it. It includes:-

I. THE RIGHT TO DWELL IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD;

II. THE VOCATION OF OFFERING SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES TO GOD;

III. THE POWER TO PROCURE BLESSING FOR OTHERS.

I. THE RIGHT TO DWELL IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

Although this privilege belonged exclusively to the priests in Israel, we know that they bad free access to the dwelling place of God. They had to abide there continually. As members of the household of God, they ate the shew-bread, and partook of the sacrifices. A true Israelite thought there was no higher privilege than this. It is thus expressed by the Psalmist, "Blessed -or happy-is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee that he may dwell in thy courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple" (Ps. lxv. 4).

It was because of the manifested presence of God there that believers, in those old days, longed after the house of God with such strong desire. The cry was, "When shall I come and appear before God (Ps. xlii. 2). They understood something of the spiritual meaning of the privilege, " Drawing near to God." It represented to them the enjoyment of His love, and fellowship, and protection, and blessing. They could exclaim, "Oh, how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee ; thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence" (Ps. xxxi. 19, 20).

The precious blood of Christ has opened the way for the believer into God's presence; and INTERCOURSE with Him is a deep, spiritual reality. He who knows the full power of the blood is brought so nigh that he can always live in the immediate presence of God, and in the enjoyment of the unspeakable blessings attached to it. There, the child of God has the assurance of God's love; he experiences and enjoys it. God Himself imparts it. He lives daily in the friendship, and fellowship of God. As God's child he makes known to the Father, with perfect freedom, his thoughts and wishes. In this INTERCOURSE with God he possesses all that he needs; he wants no good thing. His soul is kept in perfect rest and peace, because God is with him. He receives all requisite direction and teaching. God's eye is ever upon him, guiding him. In intercourse with God, he is able to hear the softest whispers of the Holy Spirit. He learns to understand the slightest sign of his Father's will, and to follow it. His strength continually increases, for God is his strength, and God is ever with him.

Fellowship with God exercises a wonderful influence on his life and character. The presence of God fills him with humility, and fear, and a holy circumspection. He lives as in the presence of a king. Fellowship with God

produces in him godlike dispositions. Beholding the image of God, he is changed into the same image. Dwelling with the holy One makes him holy. He can say, "It is good for me to draw nigh to God (Ps. lxxii. 28).

O you who are the children of the New Covenant, have not you a thousand times more reason to speak thus, now that the veil has been rent asunder, and the way opened for living always in God's holy presence? May this high privilege awaken our desires. Intercourse with God; fellowship with God; dwelling with God; and He with us: may it become impossible for us to be satisfied with anything less. This is the true Christian life.

But INTERCOURSE with God is not only so blessed because of the salvation enjoyed in it, but also on account of the service that may be rendered, because of that INTERCOURSE.

Let us therefore consider:-

II. THE VOCATION OF OFFERING SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES TO GOD.

Our vocation to bring to God spiritual sacrifices is a further privilege.

The enjoyment of the priests in drawing near to God in His dwelling place was subordinated entirely to something higher. They were there as servants of the Holy Place, to bring to God, in His house, that which belonged to Him. Only as they found joy, in drawing near to God, could that service become truly blessed.

The service consisted in:-The bringing in of the blood of sprinkling; the preparation of the incense to fill the house with its fragrance; and, further, in the ordering of everything that pertained, according to God's word, to the arrangement of His house.

They must so guard, and serve, and provide for, the dwelling place of the Most High, that it should be worthy of Him, and of His glory, and that His good pleasure in it might be fulfilled.

If the blood of Jesus brings us near, it is also, chiefly, that we should live before God as His servants, and bring to Him the spiritual sacrifices which are well pleasing in His sight.

The priests brought the blood into the Holy Place before God. In our intercourse with God there is no offering that we can bring more pleasing to Him, than a believing honouring of the blood of the Lamb. Every act of humble trust, or of hearty thanksgiving, in which we direct the attention of the Father to the blood, and speak its praises, is acceptable to Him.

Our whole abiding there, and INTERCOURSE, from hour to hour must be a glorifying of the blood before God.

The priests brought the incense into the Holy Place, so as to fill God's house with fragrance. The prayers of God's people are the delightful incense, with which He desires to be surrounded in His habitation. The value of prayer does not consist merely in its being the means of obtaining things we need. No ! it has a higher aim than that. It is a ministry of God, in which He delights.

The life of a believer who truly enjoys drawing near to God through the blood, is a life of unceasing prayer. In a deep sense of dependence, for each moment, for each step, grace is sought for and expected. In the blessed conviction of God's nearness and unchanging goodness, the soul pours itself out in the confident assurance of

faith that every promise will be fulfilled. In the midst of the joy which the light of God's face bestows, there arises at the same time, along with prayer, thanksgiving, and adoration.

These are the spiritual offerings-the offerings of the lips of the priests of God, continually presented to Him -they having been SANCTIFIED AND BROUGHT NIGH BY THE BLOOD-that they might ever live and walk in His presence.

But there is still something more. It was the duty of the priests to attend to everything far cleansing or provision that was necessary, in the ministry of the House. What is the ministry now, under the New Covenant? Thanks be to God, there are no outward nor exclusive arrangements for divine worship. No! The Father has so ordered, that whatever any one does who is walking in His presence, just because of that, it becomes a spiritual offering. Everything the believer does, if only he does it as in God's presence, and inspired by the priestly disposition, which offers it to God as a service, it is a priestly sacrifice, well pleasing to God. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. x. 31). "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. iii. 17). In this way, all our actions become thankofferings to God.

How little Christians recognise the glory of a life of complete consecration, to be spent always in intercourse with God!

CLEANSED, SANCTIFIED, and BROUGHT NIGH, by the power of the blood, my earthly calling, my whole life, even my eating and drinking, are a spiritual service. My work, my business, my money, my house, everything with which I have to do, becomes sanctified by the presence of God, because I, myself, walk in His presence. The poorest earthly work is a priestly service, because it is performed by a priest of God's temple.

But even this does not exhaust the glory of the blessing of INTERCOURSE. The highest blessing of the priesthood is, that the priest appears as the REPRESENTATIVE of OTHERS, BEFORE GOD.

III. THE POWER TO PROCURE BLESSING FOR OTHERS is what gives to nearness to God its full glory.

In Israel the priests were the mediators between God and the people. They carried into the presence of God the sins and needs of the people: they obtained from God the power to declare the pardon of sin and the right of blessing the people.

This privilege now belongs to all believers, as the priestly family of the New Covenant. When God permitted His redeemed ones to approach Him through the blood, it was that He might bless them, in order that they might become a blessing to others. Priestly mediation; a priestly heart that can have the needed sympathy with those who are weak; a priestly power to obtain the blessing of God in the temple, and convey it to others; in these things, INTERCOURSE, the drawing near to God through the blood, manifests its highest power and glory.

We can exercise our priestly dignity in a twofold manner:-

(a) BY INTERCESSION.

The ministry of intercession is one of the highest privileges of the child of God. It does not mean. that in this

ministry we, having ascertained that Chere is a need in the world, or in some particular person, pour out our wishes in prayer to God, asking ;or the necessary supply. That is good, so far as it goes, and brings a blessing with it. But the peculiar ministry of intercession is something more wonderful than that, and finds its power in " the prayer of faith." This "prayer of faith" is a different thing from the outpouring of our wishes to God, and leaving them with Him.

In the true "prayer of faith" the intercessor must spend time with God to appropriate the promises of His word, and must permit himself to be taught by the Holy Spirit, whether the promises can be applied to this particular case. He takes upon himself, as a burden, the sin and need which are the subject of prayer, and lays fast hold of the promise concerning it, as though it were for himself. He remains in the presence of God, till God, by His Spirit, awakens the faith that in this matter the prayer has been heard. In this way parents sometimes pray for their children; ministers for their congregations; labourers in God's vineyard for the souls committed to them; till they know that their prayer is heard. It is the blood, that by its power of bringing us near to God, bestows such wonderful liberty to pray until the answer is obtained. Oh! if we understood more perfectly what it really means to dwell in the presence of God, we should manifest more power in the exercise of our holy priesthood.

(b) INSTRUMENTALLY.

A further manifestation of our priestly mediation is that we not only obtain some blessing for others by INTERCESSION, but become the INSTRUMENTS by whom it is ministered. Every believer is called, and feels himself compelled by love, to labour on behalf of others. He knows that God has blessed him that he might be a blessing to others; and yet-the complaint is general that believers have no power for this work of bringing blessing to others. They are not, they say, in a condition to exercise an influence over others by their words. This is not to be wondered at, if they will not dwell in the sanctuary. We read that " The Lord separated the tribe of Levi-to stand before the Lord-and to bless in his name " (Deut. x. 8). The priestly power of blessing depends on the priestlike life in the presence of God. He who experiences there the power of the blood to preserve him, the helpless one-will have courage to believe that the blood can really deliver others. The holy iifegiving power of the blood will create in him the same disposition as that in which Jesus shed it-th sacrifice of himself to redeem others. In intercourse with God, our love will be set on fir: by the love of God, our belief that God will surely make use of us will be strengthened; the spirit o Jesus will take possession of us, to enable us to labor. in humility, in wisdom, and in power; and our weakness and poverty become the vessels in whirl God's power can work. From our word and example blessing will flow, because we dwell with Him who is pure blessing, and He will not permit anyone to be near Him without being also filled with His blessing Beloved, is not the life prepared for us a glorious a blessed one? The enjoyment of the blessedness: of being near to God ; the carrying out of the ministry s of His house; the imparting of His blessing to other: Let no one think that the full blessing is not for him that such a life is too high for him. IN THE POWER.. OF JESUS' BLOOD we have the assurance that this-, "DRAWING NEAR" is for us also, if only we wholly yield ourselves to it. For those who truly desire this blessing I give the following advice :--

i. Remember that this, and nothing less, is designed for you. All of us who are God's children have beer brought nigh by the blood. All of us can desire the full experience of it. Let us only hold this fast the. life in INTERCOURSE with God is for rye. The Father does not wish that one of His children shout be afar oft: We cannot please our God as we ought if we live without this blessing. We are priests, grace live as priests is prepared for us ; free entrance into the sanctuary as our abiding place, is for us ; we ca--be assured of this, God bestows on us His holy presence. for indwelling, as our right, as His children. Let lay fast hold of this.

ii. Seek to make the full power of the blood your own possession in all its blessed effects. IT IS IN THE POWER

OF THE BLOOD THAT INTERCOURSE is possible. Let your heart be filled with faith in the power of the blood of RECONCILIATION. Sin has been so entirely atoned for, and blotted out, that its power to keep you away from God has been completely, and for ever, taken away. Live in the joyful profession that sin is powerless to separate you one moment from God. Believe that by the blood you have been fully justified, and thus have a righteous claim to a place in the sanctuary. Let the blood also cleanse you. Expect from the fellowship that follows, the inner deliverance from the defilement of sin which still dwells in you. Say with the Scriptures c " How much more shall the blood of Christ cleanse YOUR conscience to serve the living God." Let the blood sanctify you, separate you for God, in undivided consecration, to be filled by Him. Let the PARDONING, CLEANSING, SANCTIFYING power of the blood have free course in you. You will discover how this brings you, as it were, automatically near to God, and protects you.

iii. Do not fear to expect that JESUS HIMSELF will reveal in you the power of the blood to bring you nigh to God.

The blood was shed to unite us to God.

The blood has accomplished its work, and will perfect it in you.

The blood has unspeakable virtue and glory in God's sight.

The Mercy Seat sprinkled with blood is the chosen place of God's abode and is His throne of grace. He draws near with joy and good pleasure to the heart that surrenders itself entirely to the efficacy of the blood.

The blood has irresistible power. Through the blood Jesus was raised up from the grave, and carried into heaven. Be assured the blood is able to preserve you every day in God's presence by its divine lifers= giving power. As precious and all powerful as the blood is, so sure and certain is also your abiding with God, if only you trust is steadfast. "Washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb-therefore are they before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple." That word about the eternal glory has a bearing also upon out life on earth. The fuller our faith and experiences:. of the power of the blood, just the closer the INTERCOURSE, and the more sure the abiding near the throne: the wider the entrance to the unbroken ministry of God in His sanctuary ; and here on earth just the greater the power to serve the living God just the richer the priestly blessing which you will spread around you. O Lord! may this word have its full power over us now, here, amd hereafter!

The Power of the Blood

by Andrew Murray

CHAPTER VII

Dwelling in "The Holiest" Through the Blood

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which be bath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh, and having a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water "-Heb. x. 19-22.

In these words we have a summary of the chief contents of this Epistle, and of the "Good News" about God's grace, as the Holy Spirit thus caused it to be presented to the Hebrews, and also to us.

Through sin, man was driven out of Paradise, away from the presence and fellowship of God. God in His mercy sought, from the beginning, to restore the broken fellowship.

To this end He gave to Israel, through the shadowy types of the Tabernacle, the expectation of a time to come, when the wall of partition should be removed, so that His people might dwell in His presence. "When shall I come and appear before God" was the longing sigh of the saints of the Old Covenant.

It is the sigh also of many of God's children under the New Covenant who do not understand that the way into "THE HOLIEST" has really been opened, and that every child of God may, and ought, to have his real dwelling-place there.

Oh, my brothers, and sisters, who long to experience the full power of the REDEMPTION which Jesus has accomplished, come with me, to hear what our God says to us about the opened Holy Place, and the freedom with which we can enter through the blood.

The passage at the head of this chapter shows us in a first series of four words what God has prepared for us, as the sure ground on which our fellowship with Him may rest. Then in a second series of four word: which follow, we learn how we may be prepared to enter into that fellowship, and to live in it.

Read the text with attention, and you will see that the words "LET US DRAW NEAR" are the centre of it all. This outline may be helpful.

I. WHAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR US

i. "The Holiest"-that is The Sanctuary: the Holy Place.

ii. The Blood of Jesus.

iii. A new and living way.

iv. A Great Priest.

II. HOW GOD PREPARES US FOR WHAT HE HAS PREPARED FOR US.

i. A true heart.

ii. Full assurance of faith.

iii. Hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.

iv. Bodies washed with pure water.

Read the text now with an eye on this outline. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into THE HOLIEST, by THE BLOOD OF JESUS, by A NEW AND LIVING WAY, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh, and having A GREAT PRIEST over the house of God.

"LET US DRAW NEAR WITH A TRUE HEART, IN FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH, having our hearts CLEANSED FROM AN EVIL CONSCIENCE, and our bodies WASHED WITH PURE WATER."

I. WHAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR US

(1) "THE HOLIEST."

"HAVING THEREFORE BOLDNESS TO ENTER INTO `THE HOLIEST'-LET US DRAW NEAR."

To bring us into "The Holiest" is the end of the Redemptive work of Jesus, and he who does not know what "The Holiest" is, cannot enjoy the full benefit of Redemption.

What is this "Holiest"? It is just the place where God dwells: "The Holiest"-the dwelling place of the Most High. This does not refer only to heavenbut to the spiritual "Holiest" place of God's presence.

Under the Old Covenant there was a material Sanctuary (Heb. ix. 1 and viii. 2)-the dwelling place of God, in which the priests dwelt in God's presence and served Him. Under the New Covenant there is the true spiritual Tabernacle, not confined to any place-"The Holiest" is where God reveals Himself (John iv. 23-2S).

What a glorious privilege it is to enter into "The Holiest" and dwell there; to walk all the day in the presence of God. What a rich blessing is poured out there. In "The Holiest" the favour and fellowship of God are enjoyed:-the life and blessing of God are experienced; the power and joy of God are found. Life is spent in "The Holiest" in priestly purity and consecration; there the incense of sweet savour is burned, and sacrifices acceptable to God are offered. It is a Holy life of prayer and blessedness. Under the Old Covenant everything was material, the Sanctuary also was material and local; under the New Covenant everything is spiritual, and the true Sanctuary owes its existence to the power of the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit a real life in "The Holiest" is possible, and the knowledge that God walks there can be as certain as in the case of the priests of old. The Spirit makes real in our experience the work Jesus has accomplished.

Believer in Jesus Christ, have you liberty to enter, and abide in "The Holiest"? As one who has redeemed, it is a fitting thing for you to make your home there, and not elsewhere; for Christ cannot, elsewhere, reveal the full power of His redemption. But there, oh! there, He can bless you richly. Oh! understand it then, and let the object of God and our Lord Jesus be yours also. May it be the desire of our hearts to enter into "The Holiest," to live in "The Holiest," to minister in "The Holiest." We can confidently expect the Holy Spirit to give us at conception of the glory of entering into a dwelling in "The Holiest."

(2) LIBERTY THROUGH THE BLOOD.

Admission to "The Holiest," like "The Holiest" itself, belongs to God. God Himself thought of it, and prepared it; we have the liberty, the freedom, the right, to enter by the Blood of Jesus. The Blood of Jesus exercises such a wonderful power, that through it a son of perdition may obtain full freedom toenter into the divine Sanctuary-"The Holiest." "Ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh the a blood of Christ " (Eph. ii. 13).

And how is it the Blood exercises this wonderful power?

Scripture says "the life is in the blood" (Lev. xvii. 11). The power of the Blood is in the worth of the 1ife. In the Blood of Jesus the power of the divine dwelt, and worked; the Blood has already in I-lire. almighty and unceasing power.

But that power could not be exercised for RECONCILIATION until it was first shed. By bearing the punishment of sin, unto death, the Lord Jesus conquered the power of sin, and brought it to naught. "The power of sin is the Law," by perfectly fulfilling the law, when He shed His Blood under its curse, His Blood has made sin entirely powerless. So the Blood has its wonderful power, not only because the life of God's Son was in it, but because it was given as an atonement for sin. This is the reason Scripture speaks so highly about the Blood. Through the blood of the everlasting covenant God has brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus (Heb. xiii. 20).

Through his own blood he has entered into "The Holiest" (Heb. ix. 12). The power of the Blood has entirely destroyed the power of sin, death, the grave and bell; so that our Surety could go out. The power of the Blood has opened heaven so that our Surety could freely enter.

And now we also have liberty to enter through the Blood. Sin took away our liberty of approach to God, the Blood perfectly restores to us this liberty. He who will take time to meditate upon the power of that Blood, appropriating it believingly for himself, will obtain a wonderful view of the liberty and directness with which we can now have intercourse with God.

Oh, the divine, wonderful power of the Blood! Through the Blood we enter into "The Holiest." The Blood pleads for us, and in us, with an eternal, a ceaseless effect. It removes sin from God's sight, and from our conscience. Every moment we have free, full entrance, and we can have intercourse with God through the Blood.

Oh, that the Holy Spirit might reveal to us the full power of the Blood! Under His teaching what a full entrance we enjoy to intimate fellowship with the Father. Our life is in "The Holiest" through the Blood.

(3) NEW AND LIVING WAY,

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into "The Holiest" by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way,

which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, i.e. his flesh," the Blood bestows our right of entrance. The way, as a living and life-giving one, bestows the power. That He has consecrated this way by His flesh, does not mean that this is merely a repetition in other words of the same thought as "through His blood." By no means.

Jesus has shed His Blood for us: in that particular we cannot follow Him. But the Way by which He walked when He shed His Blood, the rending of the veil of His flesh, in that way vie must follow Him. What He did in the opening of that way, is a living power which draws and carries us as we enter " The Holiest." The lesson we have to learn here is this---the way into "The Holiest" is through the RENT VEIL OF THE FLESH.

It was so with Jesus. The veil that separated God and us was the flesh. Sin has its power in the flesh, and only through the taking away of sin, the veil may be removed. When Jesus came in the flesh, He could rend the veil only by dying; and so to bring to nought the power of the flesh and sin, "He offered up the flesh, and delivered it to death." This is what gave to the shedding of His blood its worth and power.

And this remains now the law for each one who desires to enter "The Holiest" through His Blood-- must be through the rent veil of the flesh. The Blood demands, the Blood accomplishes, the rending of the flesh. Where the Blood of Jesus works powerfully, there follows, always, the putting to death of the flesh. Ile who desires to spare the flesh cannot enter into "The Holiest." The flesh must be sacrificed, given over to death. In proportion as the believer perceives the sinfulness of his flesh, and puts to death all that is in the flesh, he will better understand the power of the Blood. The believer does this, not in his own strength, he comes by a living way which Jesus has consecrated; the life-giving power of Jesus works in this "way." The Christian is crucified and dead with Jesus, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh." It is in fellowship with Christ that we enter through the veil.

Oh! glorious way, "the new and living way," full of life-giving power, "which Christ has consecrated for us!" By this way we have the liberty to enter into "the Holiest" by the Blood of Jesus. May the Lord God lead us along this "way," through the rent veil, through the death of the flesh, to the full life of the Spirit, then we shall find our dwelling place within the veil, in "The Holiest" with God. Each sacrifice of the flesh leads us, through the Blood, further into "The Holiest."

(NOTE.-Compare further, with care, i Peter iii. 18, "Christ was put to death in the flesh"; iv. 1, "Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, but living in the Spirit"; iv. 6, "Condemned sin in the flesh.")

(4) THE GREAT PRIEST.

"And having an high Priest over the house of God, let us draw near."

Praised be God, we have not only the work, but the living person of Christ, as we enter "The Holiest" ; not only the Blood and the living way, but Jesus Himself, as "High Priest over the House of God."

The priests who went into the earthly Sanctuary could do so only because of their relationship to the High Priest; none but the sons of Aaron were priests. We have an entrance into "The Holiest," because of our relationship to the Lord Jesus. He said to the Father, "Behold here am I, and the children whom thou hast given me."

HE IS THE GREAT PRIEST. The Epistle to the Hebrews has shown us that He is the true Melchisedek, the Eternal Son, who has an eternal and changeless priesthood, and as Priest is seated on the Throne He lives there to pray always, therefore also He is able "to save to the uttermost them that come to God through him." A great and

all-powerful Priest.

A HIGH PRIEST OVER THE HOUSE OF GOD, He is appointed over the entire ministry of "The Holiest," of the House of God. All the people of God are under His care. If we desire to enter "The Holiest," He is there to receive us, and to present us to the Father. He Himself will complete in us the sprinkling of the Blood. Through the Blood He has entered, through the Blood He brings us also in. He. will teach us all the duties of "The Holiest," and of our intercourse there. He makes acceptable our prayers, our offerings, and the duties of our ministry, however weak they are. What is more, He bestows on us heavenly light, and heavenly power, for our work and life in "The Holiest." It is He who imparts the life, and the Spirit of "The Holiest." Just as His Blood procured an entrance, His sacrifice of His flesh is the living way. As we enter, it is He by whom we are kept abiding there, and are able always to walk well pleasing to God. As the sympathetic High Priest He knows how to stoop to each one, even the weakest. Yes 1 that is what makes intercourse with God in "The Holiest" so attractive, we find Jesus there, as a "High Priest over the house of God."

And just when it seems to us as if "The Holiest" is too high, or too holy for us, and that we cannot understand what the power of the Blood is, and how we are to walk on "the new and living way," just then, we may look up to the living Saviour Himself to teach us, and to bring us Himself into "The Holiest." He is the Priest over the House of God. You have only to cleave to Him, and you will be in "The Holiest."

"LET US DRAW NEAR," seeing we have "The Holiest" where God waits for us; and the Blood which gives us liberty; and the living way which carries us, and the High Priest to help us. "Let us draw near," yes! "let us draw near." Let nothing hold us back from making use of these wonderful blessings which God has designed for us. It is into "The Holiest" that we are to enter; our right has been obtained for us by the Blood of Jesus; by His own footsteps He has consecrated the way. He lives in His eternal priesthood to receive us in "The Holiest"; to sanctify, to preserve, to bless us. Oh! let us not any longer hesitate or turn back. Let us sacrifice all for this one thing, in view of what God has prepared for us "let us draw near," by the hand of Jesus, to appear before our Father, and to find our life in the light of His countenance.

And do we desire to know how we can now be prepared to enter ? Our text gives us a glorious answer to this question.

II. HOW WE ARE PREPARED.

Let us draw near.

(I) WITH A TRUE HEART.

This is the first of the four demands made on the believer who wishes "to draw near." It is coupled with the second demand, "FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH," and it is chiefly in its union with the second, that we understand aright what "a true heart" means.

The preaching of the Gospel begins always with repentance and faith. Man cannot receive God's grace by faith, if at the same time sin is not forsaken. In the progress of the life of faith this law is always binding. The full assurance of faith cannot be reached without " a true heart "-a heart that is wholly honest u with God, that is surrendered entirely to Him. "The Holiest" cannot be entered without "a true heart," a heart that is truly desirous of seeking what it professes seek.

Let us draw near with a true heart." A heart that :: ly desires to forsake everything, to dwell in "The Holiest"; forsaking everything, to possess God. A heart that truly abandons everything in order to yield itself to the authority and power of the Blood. A heart that truly chooses "the new and living way" in order to go through the veil with Christ, by the rending of the flesh. A heart that truly and entirely gives itself to the indwelling and lordship of Jesus.

"Let us draw near with a true heart." Without a true heart there is no entrance into "The Holiest."

But who has a true heart? The new heart that God has given is a true heart. Recognise that. By the power of the Spirit of God, who dwells in that new heart, place yourself, by an exercise of your will, on the side of God against the sin that is still in your flesh. Say to the Lord Jesus, the High Priest, that you submit, and cast down before Him every sin, and all of your self life, forsaking all to follow Him.

And as regards the hidden depths of sin in your flesh, of which you are not yet conscious, and the malice of your heart-for them also provision is made. "Search me, O God, and know my heart." Subject yourself continually to the heart-searching light of the Spirit. He will uncover what is hidden from you. He who does this has a true heart to enter into "The Holiest."

Let us not be afraid to say to God that we draw near with a true heart. Let us be assured that God will not judge us according to the perfection of what we do, but according to the honesty with which we

yield ourselves In la-r aside every known sin, and with which we accep conviction by the Holy Spirit of all our hidden sin. A heart that does this honestly is, in God's sight, a true heart. And with a true heart " The Holiest " is approached through the Blood. Praised be God ! through His Spirit we have a true heart.

(2) IN FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH.

We know what place faith occupies in God's dealings with man. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." Here at the entrance into "The Holiest " all depends on "the full assurance of faith."

There must be "a full assurance of faith" that there is a Holy Place where we can dwell and walk with God, and that the power of the precious Blood has conquered sin so perfectly that nothing can prevent our undisturbed fellowship with God; and that the way which Jesus has sanctified through His flesh is a living way, which carries those who tread on it with eternal living power ; and that the great Priest over the house of God can save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him; that He by His Spirit works in us everything that is needful for life in "The Holiest." These things we must believe and hold fast in "the full assurance of faith."

But how can I get there? How can my faith grow to this full assurance? By fellowship with "Jesus who is the finisher of faith" (Heb. xii. 2). As the great Priest over the house of God, He enables us to appropriate faith. By considering Him, His wonderful love, His perfect work, His precious and allpowerful Blood, faith is sustained and strengthened. God has given Him to awaken faith. By keeping our eyes fixed on Him, faith and the full assurance of faith become ours.

In handling the Word of God, remember that his faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Faith comes by the Word and grows by he Word, but not the Word as letter, but as the voice of Jesus ; only " the words

that I speak unto you "are spirit-life, only in Him are the promises of God "Yea ad Amen." Take time to meditate on the Word nd treasure it in your heart, but always with a heart et on Jesus Himself. It is faith in Jesus that saves. 'he Word that is taken to Jesus in prayer, and talked ver with Him, is the Word that is effective.

Remember that "to him that hath shall be given." Take use of the faith that you have; exercise it; declare it; and let your believing trust in God become he chief occupation of your life. God wishes to ave children who believe Him; He desires nothing o much as faith. Get accustomed to say with each prayer, "Lord I believe that I shall obtain this." As you read each promise in Scripture say, "Lord I elieve Thou wilt fulfil this in me." The whole day through, make it your holy habit in everything-yes, everything-to exercise trust in God's guidance, and God's blessing.

To enter into "The Holiest" "full assurance of faith" is necessary. "Let us draw near in full assurance of faith." Redemption through the Blood is so perfect and powerful; the love and grace of Jesus so overflowing; the blessedness of dwelling in "The Holiest" is so surely for us and within our reach-"Let us draw near in full assurance of faith."

(3) THE HEART CLEANSED.

Let us draw near, having "OUR HEART CLEANSED FROM AN EVIL CONSCIENCE."

The heart is the centre of human life, and the con- again is the centre of the heart. By his conscience man realises his relationship to God, and n evil conscience tells him that all is not right between God and himself ; not merely that he commits sin, but that he is sinful, and alienated from God. A good or clear conscience bears witness that he is well pleasing to God (Heb. xi, 5). It bears witness not only that his sins are forgiven, but that his heart is sincere before God. He who desires to enter "The Holiest" must have his heart cleansed from can evil conscience. The words are translated "our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." It is the sprinkling of the Blood that avails. The Blood of Christ will purify your conscience to serve the living God.

We have already seen that entrance to "The Holiest" is by the Blood, by which Jesus went in to the Father. But that is not enough. There is a twofold sprinkling -the priests who drew near to God were not only reconciled tbrough the sprinkling of Blood before God on the altar, but their very persons must be sprinkled with the Blood. The Blood of Jesus must be so brought by the Holy Spirit into direct contact with our hearts that our hearts become cleansed from an evil conscience. The Blood removes all self-condemnation. It cleanses the conscience. Conscience then witnesses that the removal of guilt has been so perfectly completed, there is no longer the least separation between God and us. Conscience bears witness that we are well pleasing to God; that our heart is cleansed; that we through the sprinkling of the Blood are in true living fellowship with God. Yes, the Blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin, not only from the guilt but also from the stain of sin.

Through the power of the Blood our fallen nature is prevented from exercising its power, just as a fountain by its gentle spray cleanses the grass, that otherwise would be covered with dust, and keeps it fresh and green, so the Blood works with a ceaseless effect to keep the soul clean. A heart that lives under the full power of the Blood is a clean heart, cleansed from a guilty conscience, prepared to "draw near" with perfect freedom. The whole heat, the whole inner being, is cleansed by a divine operation.

"Let us draw near, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." Let us "in full assurance of faith, "believe that our hearts are cleansed. Let us honour the Blood greatly, by confessing before God that it cleanses

us. The High Priest will, by Ibis Holy Spirit, make us understand the full meaning and power of the words-"having the heart cleansed by the Blood"; the entrance to the Holy Place prepared through the Blood ; and further, our hearts prepared by the Blood for entrance; oh! how glorious then, having the heart cleansed, to enter into, and to abide in "The Holiest."

(4) THE BODY WASHED.

Let us draw near, having the body washed with dear water.

We belong to two worlds, the seen and the unseen. We have an inner, hidden life, that brings us into touch with God; and an outer, bodily life by which we are in relationship with man. If this word refers to the body, it refers to the entire life in the body with all its activities.

The heart must be sprinkled with blood, the body must be washed with pure water. When the priests were consecrated they were washed with water, as well as sprinkled with blood (Exod. xxix. 4, 20, 21). And if they went into the Holy Place there was not only the altar with its blood, but also the laver with its water. So also Christ came by water, and blood (z John v. 6). He had His baptism with water and later with blood (Luke xii. 50).

There is for us also a twofold cleansing; with water, and. blood. Baptism with water is unto repentance for laying aside of sin, "Be baptised and wash away your sins." While the Blood cleanses the heart, the inner man, baptism is the yielding of the body, with all its visible life, to separation from sin.

So "Let us draw near, having our hearts cleansed from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." The power of the Blood to cleanse inwardly cannot be experienced unless we also cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh. The divine work of cleansing, by the sprinkling of Blood, the human work of cleansing by laying aside sin, are inseparable.

We must be clean, to enter into "The Holiest." Just as you would never dream of entering in to the presence of a king unwashed, so you cannot imagine that you could come into the presence of God, in the Holy Place, if you are not cleansed from every sin. In the Blood of Christ that cleanses from all sin, God has bestowed on you the power to cleanse yourself. Your desire to live with God in "The Holiest" must always be united with the most careful laying aside of even the least sin. The unclean may not enter "The Holiest."

Praised be God, He desires to have us there. As His priests we must minister to Him there. He desires our purity, that we may enjoy the blessing of "The Holiest." That is, His Holy fellowship; and He has taken care that through the Blood, and by the Spirit, we may be clean.

Let us draw near, having our heart cleansed, and the body washed with pure water.

"LET US DRAW NEAR."

The Holiest Place is open even for those in our congregations who have not yet truly turned to the Lord. For them also the Sanctuary has been opened. The Precious Blood, the living way, and the High Priest are for them also. With great confidence we dare to invite even them-"Let us draw near." Oh, despise not, my friends still far from God, oh, despise no longer God's wonderful grace-draw near to the Father who has so earnestly sent this invitation try you ; who at the cost of the Blood of His Son, has opened a way for you into "The Holiest"; who

waits in love to receive you again into His dwelling place, as His child. Oh! I beseech you, let us all draw near. Jesus Christ the High Priest over the House of God is a perfect Saviour.

"LET US DRAW NEAR."

"Let us draw near." The invitation comes especially to all believers. Be not satisfied to stand in the porch. It is not sufficient to cherish the hope that your sins are forgiven. "Let us draw near," let us enter within the veil, let us in spirit press on to real nearness to our God. "Let us draw near" and live nearer to God, and wholly take our abode in His Holy Presence,, "Let us draw near," our place is the innermost Sanctuary.

"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." He who gives himself sincerely and entirely, to God will through the Holy Spirit experience "the full assurance of faith" to take for himself, freely and gladly, all that the Word has promised. Our weakness of faith arises from duplicity of heart. "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance" that the blessing is ours. The Blood has so perfectly atoned for and conquered sin, that nothing can hold the believer back from free admission to God.

"Let us draw near, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." Let us receive into our hearts faith in the perfect power of the Blood, and let us lay aside every thing that is not in accord with the purity of the Holy Place. Then we begin to feel ourselves daily more at home in "The Holiest." In Christ, who is our Life, we are also there. Then we learn to carry on all our work in "The Holiest." All that we do is a spiritual sacrifice well pleasing to God in Jesus Christ. Brethren, "let us draw near" as God waits for us in "The Holiest."

"LET US DRAW NEAR."

That call has special reference to prayer. Not as though we, as priests, were not always in "The Holiest" but there are moments of more immediate fellowship, when the soul turns itself entirely to God to be engaged with Him alone. Alas ! our prayer is too often a calling out to God from a distance, so there is little power in it. Let us with each prayer first see that we are really in "The Holiest." Let us with hearts perfectly sprinkled from an evil conscience, in silent faith appropriate the full effect of the Blood, by which sin as a separation between God and us is entirely removed. Yes ! let us take time till we know that, now, I am in "The Holiest" through the Blood and then-pray. Then, we can lay our desires and wishes before our Father, in the assurance that they are an acceptable incense. Then, prayer is a true "drawing near" to God, an exercise of inner fellowship with Him; then, we have courage and power to carry on our work of priestly intercession, and to pray down blessings on others. He who dwells in the Holy Place through the power of the Blood is truly one of God's saints, and the power of God's Holy and Blessed presence goes out from him, upon those who are round about him.

Brethren, "let us draw near," let us pray for ourselves, for one another, for everyone. Let "The Holiest" so become our fixed abode that we may carry about with us everywhere the presence of our God. Let this be the fountain of life for us, that grows from strength to strength, from glory to glory, always in "THE HOLIEST" BY THE BLOOD. Amen.

The Power of the Blood

by Andrew Murray

CHAPTER 8

Life in the Blood

"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, 1 say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink bis blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life ; and 1 will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 1-Ie that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him "-John vi. 5 35 6.

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?"-i Cor. x. 16.

The drinking of the blood of the Lord Jesus is the subject brought before us in these words. Just as water has a twofold effect, so is it also with this holy blood.

When water is used for washing it cleanses, but if we drink it we are refreshed and revived. He who desires to know the full power of the blood of Jesus must be taught by Him what the blessing of drinking the blood is. Everyone knows the difference there is between washing and drinking. Necessary and h Pleasant as it is to use water for cleansing, it is much more necessary and reviving to drink it. Without its cleansing it is not possible to live as we ought; but without drinking we cannot live at all. It is only by drinking that we enjoy the full benefit of its power to sustain life.

Without drinking the blood of the Son of God-- is without the most hearty appropriation of it--- life cannot be obtained.

To many there is something unpleasant in the phrase "drinking the blood of the Son of man," but it was still more disagreeable to the Jews, for the use of blood was forbidden by the law of Moses, under severe penalties. When Jesus spoke of "drinking his blood," it naturally annoyed them-but it was an unspeakable offence to their religious feelings. Char Lord, we may be sure, would not have used the phrase, had He been able otherwise to make plain to them, and to us, the deepest and most glorious truths concerning salvation by the blood.

In seeking to become partakers of the salvation here spoken of, as "DRINKING THE BLOOD OF OUR LORD"let us endeavour to understand:-

I. WHAT THE BLESSING IS, WHICH IS DESCRIBED AS. "DRINKING THE BLOOD."

II. HOW THIS BLESSING IS WROUGHT OUT IN US.

III. WHAT SHOULD BE OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS IT.

I. WHAT THE BLESSING IS WHICH IS DESCRIBED AS "DRINKING THE BLOOD."

We saw just now that drinking expresses a much more intimate connection with water than washing, and hence produces a more powerful effect. There is a blessing in the fellowship with the blood of Jesus which goes much farther than CLEANSING, or SANCTIFICATION; or rather we are enabled to see how far reaching is the influence of the blessing indicated by this phrase.

Not only must the blood do something FOR us, by placing us in a new relationship to God; but it must do something IN us, entirely renewing us within. It is to this that the words of the Lord Jesus draw our attention when He says : "Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." Our Lord distinguishes two kinds of life. The Jews, there, in His presence, had a natural life of body and soul. Many among them were devout, well intentioned men, but He said they had no life in them unless they "ate his flesh and drank his blood." They needed another life, a new, a heavenly life, which He possessed and which He could impart. All creature life must obtain nourishment outside of itself. The natural life was naturally nourished, by bread and water. The heavenly life must be nourished by heavenly food and drink, by Jesus Himself. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." Nothing less must become ours, than His lifethe life that He, as Son of man, lived on earth.

Our Lord emphasised this still more strongly in words which follow, in which He again explained what the nature of that life is :"Whoso eateth my flesh and DRINKETH MY BLOOD ha th eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day." Eternal life is the life of God. Our Lord came to earth, in the first place, to reveal that eternal life an the flesh and then to communicate it to us who are in the flesh. In Him we see the eternal life dwelling in its divine power, in a body of flesh; which was taken up into heaven. He tells us that those who eat His flesh and drink His blood, who partake of His body as their sustenance, will experience also in their own bodies the power of eternal life. "I will raise him up at the last day." The marvel of the eternal life in Christ is that it was eternal life in a human body. We must be partakers of that body, not less than in the activities of His Spirit, then our body, also, possessing that life, will one day be raised from the dead.

Our Lord said: "My flesh is meat indeed and MY BLOOD is drink indeed." The word translated "indeed" here is the same as that He used when He spoke His parable of the True Vine, "I am the true (the indeed) vine," thus indicating the difference; between what was only a symbol and what is actual truth. Earthly food is no REAL food, for it imparts no real life. The one true food is the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ which imparts and sustains life and that in no shadowy or merely symbolical manner. No, this word so frequently repeated, indicates that in a full and real sense the flesh and blood of the Lord Jesus are the food by which eternal life is nourished and sustained in us := ` My flesh is meat INDEED, and my blood is drink INDEED."

In order to point out the reality and power of this food our Lord added:-"He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him." Nourishment by His flesh and blood effects the most perfect union with Him. This is the reason that His flesh and blood have such power of eternal life. Our Lord declares here, that those who believe in Him are to experience not only certain influences from Him in their hearts, but are to be brought into the most close and abiding union with Him. "HE that DRINKETH MY BLOOD DWELLETH IN ME AND I IN HIM."

This then is the blessing of drinking the blood of the Son of man-becoming one with Him : becoming a partaker of the divine nature in Him. How real this union is may be seen from the words which follow :-"As I live by the Father, so he that eateth me even he shall live by me." Nothing save the union which exists between our Lord and the Father, can serve as a type of our union with Him. Just as in the invisible, divine nature, the two Persons are truly one, so man becomes one with Jesus; the union is just as real as that in the divine nature, only with this difference, that as human nature cannot exist apart from the body, this union includes the body also.

Our Lord "prepared for himself" a body into which He took up a human body. This body became by the body and blood of Jesus a sharer in eternal life, in the life of our Lord Himself. Those who desire to receive fulness of this blessing must be careful to enjoy all that the Scripture offers them in the holy, mysterious: expression "to drink the blood of Christ."

We shall now try to understand:

II. HOW THIS BLESSING IS WROUGHT OUT IN US: or what the "drinking of the blood of Jesus" really is.

The first idea that here presents itself is that "drinking" indicates the deep, true appropriation in our spirit, by faith, of all we understand concerning the power of the blood.

We speak sometimes of "drinking in" the words of a speaker, when we heartily give ourselves up to listen and receive them. So when the heart of anyone is filled with a sense of the preciousness and power of the blood; when he with real joy, is lost in the contemplation of it; when he, with wholehearted faith, takes it for himself, and seeks to be convinced in his inner being of the life-giving power of that blood ; then it may be rightly said that he "drinks the blood of Jesus." All that faith enables him to see of REDEMPTION, of CLEANSING, of SANCTIFICATION by the blood he absorbs into the depths of his soul.

There is a deep truth in this representation, and it gives us a very glorious demonstration of the way in which the full blessing by the blood may be obtained. And yet it is certain that out Lord intended something more than this by so repeatedly making use of the expression about "eating his flesh and drinking his blood." What this further truth is becomes clear by his institution of THE LORD'S SUPPER. For, although our Saviour did not actually deal with that Supper when He taught in Capernaum, yet He spoke on the subject of which later on The Supper was made the visible confirmation. In the Reformed Churches there are two aspects of viewing the Holy Supper. According to one which is called after the name of the Reformer Zwingli, the bread and wine in the Supper are merely tokens, or representations of a spiritual truth, to teach us that JUST AS, AND AS SURE AS, bread and wine when eaten or drunk, nourish and revive, so surely-and even more surely-the body and blood recognised and appropriated by faith, nourish and quicken the soul.

According to the other view which bears the name of Calvin, there is something more than this in the eating of the Supper. He teaches that in a hidden and incomprehensible way, but yet really, we, through the Holy Spirit, become so nourished by the body and blood of Jesus in beaven, that even our body, through the power of His body, becomes a partaker in the power of eternal life. Hence He connects the resurrection of the body with the eating of Christ's body in the Supper. He writes thus:-"The bodily presence which the Sacrament demands is such, and exercises such a power here (in the Supper) that it becomes not only the undoubted assurance in our spirit of eternal life, but also assures the immortality of the flesh. If anyone asks me how this can be, I am not ashamed to acknowledge that it is a mystery too high for my spirit to comprehend, or my words to express. I feel it more than I can understand it."

"It may seem incredible indeed that the flesh of Christ should reach us from such immense local distance so as to become our food. But we must remember how far the power of the Holy Spirit transcends all our senses. Let faith then embrace what the understanding cannot grasp, namely :-The sacred communication of His flesh and blood by which Christ transfuses His life into us, just as if it penetrated our bones and marrow."

The communion of the flesh and blood of Christ is necessary for all who desire to inherit eternal life. The Apostle says:-" The Church . . . is his body " (Eph. i. 23) ; " He is the head from whom the whole body fitly joined together maketh increase of the body " (Eph. iv. 15, 16). Our bodies are members of Christ (z Cor. vi. 15, x6). We see that all this cannot take place if He is not attached to us in body and spirit. The Apostle again makes use of a glorious expression, " We are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones." Then He cries out, " The mystery is great." It would therefore be folly not to recognise the communion of believers in the body and blood of the Lord; a communion which the Apostle esteemed so great that he wondered at it, rather than explained it.

There is something more in the Supper than simply the believer appropriating the redemptive work of Christ. This is made clear in the Heidelburg catechism in Question 76 : " What is it then to eat the crucified body of Christ and to drink His shed blood? " The answer is, " It is not only to embrace with a believing heart all the sufferings and death of Christ, and thereby to receive pardon of sin and eternal life; but, also, besides that, to become more and more united to His sacred body, by the Holy Spirit who dwells at once both in Christ and in us ; so that we, though Christ is in heaven and we on earth, are, notwithstanding, flesh of His flesh, and bone of His bones ; and we live and are governed for ever by one Spirit."

The thoughts that are expressed in this teaching are in entire agreement with Scripture.

In the creation of man, the remarkable thing which should distinguish him from the spirits which God had previously created, and which should make man the crowning work of God's wisdom and power was, that he should reveal the life of the spirit and the glory of God in a body formed out of dust. Through the body lust and sin came into the world. Full redemption is designed to deliver the body, and to make it God's abode. Redemption will be perfect and God's purpose accomplished only then. This was the purpose for which the Lord Jesus came in the flesh, and in Him dwelt " all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." For this He bore our sins in His body on the tree, and by His death and resurrection He delivered the body, as well as the spirit, from the power of sin and death. As the first fruits of this redemption, we are now one body, as well as one Spirit, with Him. We are of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. It is because of this, that in the observance of the Holy Supper the Lord comes to the body also, and takes possession of it. Not only does He work by His Spirit on our spirit, so as to make out body share in redemption at the resurrection. No, already, here, the body is the temple of the Spirit, and the Sanctification of soul and spirit will progress the more gloriously, just in proportion as the undivided personality, including the body, which exercises such an opposing influence, has a share in it.

Thus we are in the Sacrament so intentionally fed, by "the real natural body, and the real blood of Christ "-not following the teaching of Luther, that the body of Christ is so in the bread, that even an unbeliever eats the holy body; but in such wise "real," that faith, in a secret way, by the Spirit, really receives THE POWER OF THE I-IDLY BODY AND BLOOD FROM HEAVEN, as the food by which soul and body become partakers of eternal life.

> (NOTE: The words within inverted commas, " the real natural body and the real blood of Christ," are quoted by Dr. Murray from the Articles of the Confession of Faith of the Reformed Churches of Holland, but Dr. Murray did not add the words immediately following, which declare that " the manner of our partaking of the same is not by the mouth, but by the Spirit through faith." Dr. Murray remained true to the Reformed Faith. His own view is expressed on page 99 by the words quoted from the Heidelburg Catechism.)

All that has now been said about the Supper, must have its full application to-"The drinking of the blood of

Jesus." It is a deep spiritual mystery in which the most intimate, the most perfect union with Christ, is effected. It takes place where the soul, through the Holy Spirit, fully appropriates the communion of the blood of Christ, and becomes a true partaker of the very disposition which He revealed in the shedding of His blood. The blood is the soul, the life of the body ; where the believer as one body with Christ desires to abide perfectly in Him, there, through the Spirit, in a superhuman powerful way, the blood will support and strengthen the heavenly life. The life that was poured out the blood, becomes his life. The life of the old " I " dies to make room for the life of Christ in him. By perceiving how this drinking is the highest participation in the heavenly life of the Lord, faith has one of its highest and most glorious offices.

It remains to inquire:

III. WHAT SHOULD BE OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THIS DRINKING?

Beloved brethren, you have already heard that we have here one of the deepest mysteries of the life of God in us. It behoves us to draw near with very deep reverence while we ask the Lord Jesus to teach us and bestow upon us what He means by this " drinking of His blood."

ONLY HE WHO LONGS FOR FULL UNION WITH JESUS WILL LEARN ARIGHT WHAT IT IS TO DRINK THE BLOOD OF JESUS. " He that drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him." He who is satisfied with just the forgiveness of his sins ; he who does not thirst to be made to drink abundantly of the love of Jesus ; he who does not desire to experience redemption for soul and body, in its full power, so as to have truly in himself the same disposition that was in Jesus, will have but a small share in this " drinking of the blood." He who, on the other hand, sets before him as his chief object, that which is also the object of Jesus : " abide in me and I in you " ; who desires that the power of eternal life should operate in his body; he will not suffer himself to be frightened by an impression that these words are too high or too mysterious. He longs to become heavenly minded because he belongs to heaven, and is going there ; therefore he desires to obtain his meat and drink also from heaven. Without thirst, there is no drinking. The longing after Jesus and perfect fellowship with Him is the thirst which is the best preparation for being made to drink the blood.

IT IS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT THAT THE THIRSTY SOUL WILL BE MADE TO DRINK OF THE HEAVENLY REFRESHMENT OF THIS LIFE-GIVING DRINK. We have already said that this drinking is a heavenly mystery. In heaven, where God the judge of all is, and where Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant is, there also is " the blood of sprinkling " (Heb. xii. 23, 24). When the Holy Spirit teaches us-taking us, as it were, by the hand-He bestows more than our merely human understanding can grasp. All the thoughts that we can entertain about the blood or the life of Jesus about our share in that blood, as members of His body ; and about the impartation to us of the living power of that blood ; all are but feeble rays of the glorious reality, which He-the Holy Spirit-will bring into being in us through our union with Jesus.

Where, I pray, in our human bodies, do we find that the blood is actually received, and as it were drunk in ? Is it not where one member of the body after another, through the veins, receives the blood-stream which is continually renewed from the heart ? Each member of a healthy body ceaselessly and abundantly drinks in the blood. So the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus who unites us to Him, will make this drinking of the blood the natural action of the inner life. When the Jews complained that what the Lord had spoken concerning eating His flesh and drinking His blood was " a hard saying," He said " it is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." It is the Holy Spirit who makes this divine mystery LIFE AND POWER in us; a true living experience, in which we abide in Jesus and He in us.

THERE MUST BE ON OUR PART A QUIET, STRONG, SETTLED EXPECTANCY OF FAITH, THAT THIS BLESSING WILL BE BESTOWED ON US. We must believe that all the precious blood can do, or bestow, is really for us.

Let us believe that the Saviour Himself will cause us, through the Holy Spirit, to drink His blood unto life. Let us believe, and very heartily and continuously appropriate those effects of the blood which we understand better, namely, its Reconciling, Cleansing, Sanctifying effects.

We may then with the greatest certainty and joy, say to the Lord : " O Lord, Thy blood is my life drink. Thou who hast washed and cleansed me by that blood, Thou wilt teach me every day ` to eat the flesh of the Son of man, and to drink His blood' so that I may abide in Thee and Thou in me." He will surely do this.

The Power of the Blood

by Andrew Murray

CHAPTER 9

Victory Through the Blood

"They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony ; and they loved not their Uves unto death "-Rev. xii. i i .

FOR thousands of years there had been a mighty conflict for the possession of mankind, between the Old Serpent, who led man astray, and " The seed of the woman."

Often it seemed as though the kingdom of God had come in power; then at other times the might of evil obtained such supremacy that the strife appeared to be hopeless.

It was thus also in the life of our Lord Jesus. By His coming, His wonderful words and works, the most glorious expectations of a speedy redemption were awakened. How terrible was the disappointment which the death of Jesus brought to all who had believed in Him! It seemed, indeed, as if the powers of darkness had conquered, and had established them kingdom for ever.

But, behold! Jesus is risen from the dead, an apparent victory proved to be the terrible downfall of the prince of darkness. By bringing about the deaths. of " The Lord of Life," Satan permitted Him, who alone was able to break open the gates of death, to enter his kingdom. " Through death he has destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil," In that holy moment when our Lord shed His blood in death, and it seemed as if Satan were victorious--the adversary was robbed of the authority he had hitherto possessed.

Our text gives a very grand representation of these memorable events. The best commentators, notwithstanding differences in details of exposition, are united in thinking, that we have here a vision of the casting out of Satan from heaven, as a result of the Ascension of Christ.

We read in verses 5-9 : The woman "brought forth a man-child, who . . . was caught up unto God, and to his throne . . . . And there was war in heaven; and Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought, and his angels, and prevailed not ; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

Then follows the song from which the text is taken: " Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the BLOOD OF THE LAMB, and by the word of their testimony ; and they loved not their lives even unto death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell therein."

The point which deserves our special attention is, that while the conquest of Satan, and his being cast out of heaven, is first represented as the result of the Ascension of Jesus and the war in heaven which followed, yet in

the song of triumph which was heard in heaven, victory is ascribed chiefly to THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB; this was the power by which the victory was gained.

Through the whole book of the Revelation we see the Lamb on the Throne. It is as the slain Lamb that He has gained that position; THE VICTORY OVER SATAN AND ALL HIS AUTHORITY IS BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB.

We have spoken about the blood in its manifold effects ; it is fitting that we should seek to understand how it is that victory is always ascribed to THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB.

We shall consider victory:

I. AS GAINED ONCE FOR ALL.

II. AS BEING EVER CARRIED ON.

III. AS ONE IN WHICH WE HAVE A SHARE.

I. THE VICTORY WHICH WAS GAINED ONCE FOR ALL.

In the exalted representation given in our text we see what a high position was once occupied by Satan, the great enemy of the human race. He had entrance into heaven, and appeared there as the accuser of the brethren and as the opponent of whatever was done in the interests of God's people.

We know how this is taught in the Old Testament. In the book of job we see Satan coming, with the Sons of God, to present himself before the Lord; and to obtain permission from Him to tempt His servant job (Job ii). In the book of Zechariah (iii. i and z) we read that he saw " Joshua the High Priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him " (R.V., " be his adversary "). Then there is the statement of our Lord, recorded in Luke x. 18, " I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." Later on, in His agony of soul, as He felt beforehand His approaching sufferings, He said, " Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John xii. 3 z).

It may, at first thought, seem strange that the Scriptures should represent Satan as being in heaven ; but to understand this aright it is necessary to remember that heaven is not a small, circumscribed dwelling place, where God and Satan had intercourse as neighbours. No 1 heaven is an illimitable sphere, with very many different divisions, filled with innumerable hosts of angels, who carry out God's will in nature. Among them, Satan also still held a place. Then remember, he is not represented in Scripture to be the black, grisly figure in outward appearance as he is generally pictured, but as " an angel of light." He was a prince, with ten thousands of servants.

When he had brought about the fall of man, and had also transferred the world to himself and became its prince, he had real authority over all that was in it. Man had been destined to be king of this world, for God has said, " Have thou authority." When Satan had conquered the king, he took his entire kingdom under his authority; and this authority was recognised by God. God, in His holy will, had ordained that if man listened to Satan, he must suffer the consequences, and become subject to his tyranny. God never in this matter used His power or exercised force, but always took the way of Law and Right; and so Satan retained his authority until it was taken from him in a lawful manner.

This is the reason why he could appear before God in heaven, as accuser of the brethren and in opposition to them for the 4,000 years of the Old Covenant.

He had obtained authority over all flesh, and only after he was conquered IN FLESH, AS THE SPHERE OF HIS AUTHORITY, could he be cast out for ever, as accuser, from the Court of Heaven.

So the Son of God, also, had to come IN FLESH, in order to fight and conquer Satan, on bis own ground.

For this reason also, at the commencement of His public life, our Lord after His anointing, being thus openly recognised as the Son of God, " was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." Victory over Satan could be gained only after He had personally endured and resisted his temptations.

But ever this victory was not sufficient. Christ came in order that " through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil." The devil had that power of death because of the .Law of God. That law had installed him as jailor of its prisoners. Scripture says : " The sting of death is sin, and the POWER OF SIN IS THE LAW." Victory over, and the casting out of Satan, could not tak: place till the righteous demands of the law were perfectly fulfilled. The sinner must be delivered from the power of the law, before he could be delivered from the authority of Satan.

It was through His death, and the shedding of His blood, that the Lord Jesus fulfilled the law's demands. Ceaselessly, the law had been declaring that " The wages of sin is death " ; " The soul that sinneth if: shall die." By the typical ministry of the Temple, by the sacrifices with the blood-shedding and blood sprinkling, the Law had foretold, that RECONCILIATION and REDEMPTION could take place only by the shedding of blood. As our Surety, the Son of God was born under the law. He obeyed it perfectly. He resisted the temptations of Satan to withdraw Himself from under its authority. He willingly gave Himself up to bear the punishment of sin. He gave no ear to the temptation of Satan, to refuse the cup of suffering. When He shed His blood He had devoted His whole life, to its very end, to the fulfilling of the law. When the law had been thus perfectly fulfilled, the authority of sin and Satan was brought to an end. Therefore death could not hold Him. " Through the blood of the everlasting covenant " God brought Him " again from the dead." So also He " entered heaven by his own blood," to make His RECONCILIATION effective for us.

The text gives us a striking description of the glorious result of the appearing of our Lord in heaven. We read concerning the mystic woman: " She brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne . . . . There was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought, and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world : and he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast our with him." Then follows the: song of victory in which the words of our text occur : "They overcame him by the BLOOD OF THE LAMB."

In the book of Daniel we read of a previous conflict between this Michael, who stood on the side of God's people Israel; and the opposing world powers. But only now can Satan be cast out because of the blood of the Lamb. Reconciliation for sin and the fulfilment of the law have taken from him all his authority, and. right. The blood, as we have already seen, that had done such wonderful things in heaven, with God, in blotting out sin, and bringing it to naught, had a similar power over Satan. He has now no longer any right to accuse. " Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down . . . . And they overcame him by the blood of the lamb."

II. THERE IS A PROGRESSIVE VICTORY: which follows on this first victory. Satan having been cast down to earth, the heavenly victory must now be carried out here.

This is indicated in the words of the Song of Victory, "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb." This was primarily spoken concerning " the brethren " mentioned, but it refers also to the victory of the angels. The victory in heaven and on earth progresses simultaneously, resting on the same ground.

We know from the portion in Daniel already mentioned (Dan. x. 12, 13) what fellowship there exists between heaven and earth in carrying on the work of God. As soon as Daniel prayed the angel became active, and the three weeks' strife in the heavenlies, were three weeks of prayer and fasting on earth. The conflict here on earth is the result of a conflict in the invisible region of the heavenlies. Michael and his angels, as well as the brethren on earth, gained the victory " by the blood of the Lamb."

In the twelfth chapter of Revelation we are clearly taught how the conflict was removed from heaven to earth. "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth" exclaimed the voice in heaven, " for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." "And when the dragon saw that he was cast down unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child."

The woman signifies nothing else than the church of God, out of which Jesus was born: when the devil could not harm Him any more, he persecutes His church. The disciples of our Lord, and the church in the first three centuries had experience of this. In the bloody persecutions in which hundreds of thousands of Christians perished as martyrs, Satan did his utmost to lead the church into apostasy, or to root it out altogether ; but in its full sense, the statement that " they overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony ; and they loved not their lives even unto death " applies to the martyrs.

After the centuries of persecution, there came to the church centuries of rest and worldly prosperity. Satan had tried force in vain. By the favour of the world he might have better success. In the church conformed to the world everything became darker and darker, till in the Middle Ages the Romish apostasy reached its climax. Nevertheless during all these ages there were not a few who in the midst of surrounding misery, fought the fight of faith, and by the piety of their lives and witness for the Lord the statement was often established: " They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives even unto death."

This was no less the secret power by which, through the blessed Reformation, the mighty authority which Satan had gained in the church was broken down. " They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb." It was the discovery, and experience, and preaching of the glorious truth that we are " justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood," that gave to the Reformers such wonderful power, and such a glorious victory.

Since the days of the Reformation it is still apparent that in proportion as the blood of the Lamb is gloried in, the church is constantly inspired by a new life to obtain the victory over deadness or error. Yes, even in the midst of the wildest heathen, where the throne of Satan has been undisturbed for thousands of years, this is still the weapon by which its power must be destroyed. The preaching of " the blood of the cross " as the RECONCILIATION for the sin of the world, and the ground of God's free, forgiving love, is the power by which the most darkened heart is opened and softened, and from being a dwelling place of Satan is changed into a temple of the Most High.

What avails for the church, is available also for each Christian. In " the blood of the Lamb," he always has victory. It is when the soul is convinced of the power which that blood has with God, in heaven, to effect a perfect RECONCILIATION, and the blotting out of sin; and to rob the devil of his authority over us completely and for ever ; and to work out in our hearts a full assurance of the favour of God ; and to destroy the power of sinit is, I say, when the soul lives in the power of the blood, that the temptations of Satan cease to ensnare.

Where the holy blood of the Lamb is sprinkled, there God dwells, and Satan is put to flight. In heaven, and on earth, and in our hearts, that word as the announcement of a PROGRESSIVE VICTORY is valid:-" They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb."

III. WE ALSO HATE A SHARE IN THIS VICTORY-if we are reckoned among those who have been cleansed "in the blood of the Lamb."

To have the full enjoyment of this we must pay attention to the following facts :--

i. THERE CAN BE NO VICTORY WITHOUT CONFLICT.

We must recognise that we dwell in an enemy's territory. What was revealed to the apostle in his heavenly vision must hold good in our daily lives. Satan has been cast down into the earth, he has great wrath because he has but a short time. He cannot now reach the glorified Jesus, but seeks to reach Him by attacking His people. We must live always under the holy consciousness that we are watched, every moment, by an enemy of unimaginable cunning and power; who is unwearied in his endeavour to bring us entirely, or even partially-however little it may be-under his authority. He is literally " the prince of this world." All that is in the world is ready to serve him, and he knows how to make use of it in his attempts to lead the church to be unfaithful to her Lord ; and to inspire her with his spiritthe spirit of the world.

He makes use, not only of temptations to what is commonly esteemed to be sin, but he knows how to gain an entrance into our earthly engagements and businesses ; in the seeking for our daily bread and necessary motley; in our politics ; our commercial combinations; our literature and science ; in our knowledge; and all things, and, so, to make all that is lawful in itself into a tool to forward his devilish deceptions.

The believer who desires to share in the victory over Satan "through the blood of the Lamb" must be a fighter. He must take pains to understand the character of his enemy. He must allow himself to be taught by the Spirit through the Word what the secret cunning of Satan is, which is called in Scripture " The depths of Satan," by which he so often blinds and deceives men. He must know that this strife is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, `c against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places " (Eph. vi. y z). He must devote himself, in every way, and at all costs, to carry on the strife till death. Then only will he be able to join in the song of victory, " They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony ; and they loved not their lives even unto death."

ii. VICTORY IS THROUGH FAITH.

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God ? " (z John v. q and 5). " Be of good cheer," said our Lord Jesus, " I have overcome the world." Satan is pan already y conquered enemy. He has nothing, absolutely nothing by right, to say to one who belongs to the Lord Jesus. By unbelief, or by ignorance of, or letting go my hold of the fact that I have

a participation in the victory of Jesus, I may give Satan, again, an authority over me which otherwise he does not possess. But when I know, by a living faith, that I am one with the Lord Jesus, and that the Lord Himself lives in me, and that He maintains and carries on in me that victory which He gained; then Satan has no power over me. Victory " through the blood of the Lamb " is the power of my life.

Only this faith can inspire courage and joy in the strife. By thinking of the terrible power of the enemy; of his never sleeping watchfulness ; of the way in which he has taken possession of everything on earth by which to tempt us; it might well be said-as some Christians think-that the strife is too severe ; it is not possible to live always under such tension; that life would be impossible. This is perfectly true, if we in our weakness had to meet the enemy, or gain the victory by our own might. But that is not what we are called upon to do. JESUS IS THE VICTOR; so we need only to have our souls filled with the heavenly vision of Satan being cast out of heaven by Jesus ; filled with faith in the blood by which Jesus Himself conquered, and with faith that He Himself is with us, to maintain the power and victory of His blood: then we also " are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

iii. THIS VICTORY OF FAITH IS IN FELLOWSHIP WITH THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB.

Faith is not merely a thought of which I lay hold, a conviction that possesses me-it is a life. Faith brings the soul into direct contact with God, and the unseen things of heaven, but above all, with the blood of Jesus. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO BELIEVE IN VICTORY OVER SATAN BY THE BLOOD WITHOUT BEING MYSELF BROUGHT ENTIRELY UNDER ITS POWER.

Belief in the power of the blood awakens in me a desire for an: experience of its power in myself; each experience of its power makes belief in victory more carious.

Seek to enter more deeply into the perfect RECONCILIATION WITH GOD which is yours. Live, Constantly, exercising faith in the assurance that " the blood cleanseth from all sin " ; yield yourself to be sanctified and brought nigh to God through the blood; let it be your life-giving nourishment and Dower. You will thus have an unbroken experience of `° victory over Satan and his temptations. He who, as a consecrated priest, walks with God, will rule as a conquering king over Satan.

Believers, our Lord Jesus by His blood has made Las not only priests but kings unto God, that we may thaw near to God not only in priestly purity and Ministry, but that also in kingly power we may rule Or God. A kingly spirit must inspire us; a kingly courage to rule over our enemies. The blood of the Lamb must increasingly be a token and seal, not only of .RECONCILIATION for all guilt, but of victory aver all the power of sin.

The Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus, and the casting out of Satan, were the results of the shedding of His blood. In you also, the sprinkling of the blood -will open the way for the full enjoyment of Resurrection with Jesus, and of being seated with Him in the heavenly places.

I once more, therefore, beseech you to open your entire being to the incoming of the power of the blood of Jesus, then your life will become a continual observance of the Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord, and a continual victory over all the powers of hell. Your heart, too, will constantly unite with the song of heaven, " Now is come salvation, and strength, r-ad the kingdom of our God, and the power of his, Christ, for the accuser of the brethren is cast down.. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb (Rev. x11. I o, I I).

The Power of the Blood

by Andrew Murray

CHAPTER 10

Heavenly Joy Through the Blood

"After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number . . . which stood before the throne, and before the Lamb. . . and they cried with a loud voice saying, g Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.' These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb "-Rev. vii. 9-z4.

These words occur in the well-known vision of the great multitude in heavenly glory, which no man could number. In spirit, the Apostle saw them standing before the throne of God, and of the Lamb, clothed with long white robes, and with palms in their hands; and they sang with a loud voice, " Salvation to our God which sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb." All the angels answered this song by falling down on their faces before the throne, to worship God, and to offer eternal praise and glory to Him.

Then one of the Elders, pointing out the great multitude, and the clothing which distinguished them, put the question to John, " What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?" John replied, " Sir, thou knowest." Then the Elder said, " These are they which came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple."

This explanation, given by one of the Elders who stood round the throne, concerning the state of the redeemed in their heavenly glory, is of great value.

It reveals to us the fact that not only in this world of sin and strife is the blood of Jesus the one hope of the sinner, but that in heaven when every enemy has been subdued that precious blood will be recognised for ever as the ground of our salvation. And we learn that the blood must exercise its power with God in heaven, not only as long as sin has still to be dealt with here beneath, but that through all eternity each one of the redeemed to the praise and glory of the blood will bear the sign of how the blood has availed for him arid that he owes his salvation entirely to it.

If we have a clear insight into this we shall understand better what a true and vital connection there is between " the sprinkling of the blood " and the joys of heaven ; and that a true intimate connection with the blood on earth, will enable the believer while still on earth to share the joy and glory of heaven.

JOY IN HEAVEN THROUGH THE BLOOD, is because it is the blood that:

I. BESTOWS THE RIGHT TO A PLACE IN HEAVEN.

II. MAKES US FIT FOR THE PLEASURES OF HEAVEN.

III. THAT PROVIDES SUBJECT - MATTER FOR THE SONG OF HEAVEN.

I. IT IS THE BLOOD THAT BESTOWS ON US THE RIGHT TO A PLACE IN HEAVEN.

It is clear that this is the leading thought in the text. In the question, " What are these which are arrayed in white robes and whence come they ? " the Elder desires to awaken attention and inquiry as to who these favoured persons really are, who stand thus before the throne, and before the Lamb, with palms in their hands. And, as he himself gives the reply, we expect that he will surely mention what might be thought to be the most remarkable thing in their appearance. He replies to the question-" Whence come they?" by saying that "they come out of the great tribulation." To the question, "Who are these ? " he replies, that they have washed their long white robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

That is the one thing to which, as their distinguishing mark, he draws attention. This alone, gives them the right to the place which they occupy in glory. This becomes plainly evident, if we notice the words which immediately follow: " therefore are they before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." " Therefore "-it is because of that blood that they are before the throne. They owe it to the blood of the Lamb, that they occupy that place so high in glory. The blood gives the right to beaven.

RIGHT to heaven 1 Can such a thing be spoken of in connection with a condemned sinner ? Would it not be better to glory in the mercy of God only, who, by free grace, admits a sinner to heaven, than to speak of a RIGHT to heaven ? No 1 it would not be better -for then we should not understand the value of the blood, or why it had to be shed. We should also entertain false conceptions both of our sin and of God's grace, and remain unfit for the full enjoyment of the glorious Redemption which the Saviour has accomplished for us.

We have already spoken of "the casting out of Satan from heaven," and have shown from this incident, that a holy God acts always according to law. Just as the devil was not " cast out " otherwise than according to law and right, so the sinner cannot be admitted in any other way. The Prophet said, " Zion shall be redeemed with judgment and her converts with righteousness " (Isa. i. z7). St. Paul tells us that " grace reigns THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS " (Rom. v. 21 This was the purpose for which God sent His Son into the world. Instead of being afraid that speaking of having a RIGHT to enter heaven might belittle grace, it will be seen that the highest glory of grace consists in bestowing that RIGHT.

The lack of this insight is sometimes found in the church where it might be least expected. Recently I asked a man who spoke of the hope he had of going to heaven when he died, on what ground he rested his hope. He was not by any means a careless man, nor did he trust to his own righteousness, and yet he replied, " Well, I think that I strive my best to seek the Lord, and to do His will." When I told him that this was no ground on which to stand before the judgment seat of a holy God, he appealed to the mercy of God. When I told him, again, that he needed more than mercy-it appeared to him to be something new to hear that it was the righteousness of God, only, that could grant him entrance into heaven. It is to be feared that there are many who listen to the preaching of " Justification by faith," but who have no idea that they cannot have a share in eternal blessedness save by being declared legally righteous.

Entirely different was the testimony of a certain lad who had not the full use of his intellectual faculties, but whose heart the Spirit of God had enlightened to understand the meaning of the crucifixion of Jesus.

When on his death-bed he was asked about his hope, he intimated that there was a great book, on one of the pages of which his many sins, very many, had been written. Then with the finger of his right hand he pointed to the palm of his left hand, indicating the print of the nail there. Taking, as it were, something from the pierced hand-he was thinking of the blood that marked it-be showed how all that was written on that page was now blotted out. The blood of the Lamb was the ground of his hope.

The blood of the Lamb gives the believing sinner a RIGHT to heaven. " Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." By shedding His blood He really bore the punishment of sin. He gave Himself up to death realy in our place. He gave His life as a ransom for many. Now that the punishment is borne, and our Lord's blood has really been shed as a ransom, and appears before the throne of God in heaven, now the righteousness of God declares that as the sinner's Surety had fulfilled all the requirements of the law, both as regards punishment and obedience, God pronounces the sinner who believes in Christ to be righteous. Faith is just the recognition that Christ has really done everything for me ; that God's declaration of righteousness is just His declaration that, according to the law and right, I have a title to salvation. God's grace bestows on me the RIGHT to heaven. The blood of the Lamb is the evidence of this RIGHT. If I have been cleansed by that blood, I can meet death with full confidence-I have a RIGHT to heaven.

You desire and hope to get to heaven. Listen then to the answer given to the question-Who are they who will find a place before the throne of God ? " They have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." That washing takes place, not in heaven, and not at death, but here, during our life on earth. Do not deceive yourselves by a hope of heaven, if you have not been cleansed, really cleansed, by that precious blood. Do not dare to meet death without knowing that Jesus Himself has cleansed you by His blood.

II. THE BLOOD ALSO BESTOWS THE MEETNESS FOR HEAVEN.

It is of little use for men to have a right to anything unless they are fitted to enjoy it. However costly the gift, it is of little use if the inner disposition necessary to the enjoyment of it is wanting. To bestow t:;.. right to heaven on those who are not at the sari me time prepared for it, would give them no pleasure, but would be in conflict with the perfection of all God's; works.

The power of the blood of Jesus not only sets open the door of heaven for the sinner but it operates on him in such a divine way that, as he enters heaven, it will appear that the blessedness of beaven and he have been really fitted for each other.

What constitutes the blessedness of heaven, anal what the disposition is that is fitted for it, we are told by words connected with our text. " Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple ; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more:, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Nearness to and fellowship with God and the Lamb, constitute the blessedness of heaven. To be before the throne of God, and to see His face ; to serve Him day and night in His temple ; to be overshadowed by Him who sits upon the throne; to be fed and led by the Lamb; all these expressions point out how little the blessedness of heaven depends on anything else than on GOD AND THE LAMB. To see them, to have intercourse with them, to be acknowledged, loved, cared for by them-that is blessedness.

What preparation is needed for having such intercourse with God and the Lamb ? It consists in two things :--

i. Inner agreement in mind and will, and

ii. Delight in His nearness and fellowship and both are purchased by the blood.

i. There can be no thought of fitness for heaven apart from oneness with God's will. How could two dwell together unless they agreed ? And because God is the holy One, the sinner must be cleansed from his sin, and sanctified, otherwise he remains utterly unfit for what constitutes the happiness of heaven. " Without holiness no man can see the Lord." Man's entire nature must be renewed, so that he may think, and desire, and will, and do, what pleases God; not as a matter of mere obedience, in keeping a commandment, but from natural _pleasure, and because be cannot do or will otherwise. Holiness must become his nature.

Is not this just what we have seen that the blood of the Lamb does? "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Where reconciliation and pardon are applied by the Holy Spirit, and are retained by a living faith, there the blood operates with a divine power, killing sinful lusts and desires ; the blood exercises constantly a wonderful cleansing power. In the blood, the power of the death of Jesus operates; we died with Him to sin; through a believing intercourse with the blood, the power of the death of Jesus presses into the innermost parts of our hidden life. The blood breaks the power of sin, and cleanses from all sin.

The blood sanctifies also. We have seen, that cleansing is but one part of salvation, the taking away of sin. The blood does more than this; it takes possession of us for God, and inwardly bestows the very same disposition which was in Jesus when He shed His blood. In shedding that blood, He sanctified Himself for us, that we also should be sanctified by the truth. As we delight and lose ourselves in that holy blood, the power of entire surrender to God's will and glory; the power to sacrifice everything, to abide in God's love., which inspired the Lord Jesus, is efficacious in us.

The blood sanctifies us for the emptying and surrender of ourselves, so that God may take possession of us, and fill us with Himself. This is true holiness; to be possessed by, and filled with God. This is wrought out by the blood of the Lamb, and so we are prepared here on earth to meet God in heaven with unspeakable joy.

ii. In addition to having one will with God, we said that fitness for heaven consisted in the desire and capacity for enjoying fellowship with, God. In this, also, the blood bestows, here, on earth, the true preparation for heaven. We have seen how the blood brings us near to God; leading to a priestlike approach, yea, we have liberty, by the blood, to enter into " The Holiest " of God's presence, and to make our dwelling place there. We have seen that God attaches to the blood such incomprehensible value, that where the blood is sprinkled, there is His throne of grace. When a heart places itself under the full operation of the blood, there God dwells, and there His salvation is experienced. THE BLOOD MAKES POSSIBLE THE PRACTICE OF FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD, and not less with the Lamb-with the Lord Jesus Himself. Have we forgotten His word : " he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him ? " The full blessing of the power of the blood, in its highest effect, is FULL ABIDING UNION WITH JESUS. It is only our unbelief that separates the work from the person; and the blood from the Lord Jesus. It is I-3E, HIMSELF, who cleanses by His blood, and brings us near, and causes us to drink. It is only through the blood that we are fitted for full fellowship with Jesus in heaven, just as with the Father.

Ye who are redeemed 3 Here you can see what is needed to mould you for heaven; to make you, even here, heavenly minded. See that the blood, which always has a place at the throne of grace above, manifests its power,

always, also in your hearts ; and your lives will become an unbroken fellowship with God and the Lamb : the foretaste of life in eternal glory. Let the thought enter deeply into your soul the blood bestows already in the heart, here on earth, the blessedness of heaven. The precious blood makes life on earth and life in heaven one.

III. THE BLOOD PROVIDES SUBJECT MATTER FOR THE SONG OF HEAVEN.

What we have hitherto said has been taken from what the Elder stated about the redeemed. But how far is this their experience and testimony ? Have we anything out of their own mouths concerning this ? Yes, they themselves bear witness. In the song, contained in our text, they were heard to cry with loud voice, " Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." It is as the slain Lamb, that the Lord Jesus is in the midst of the throne, as a Lamb whose blood had been shed. As such, He is the object of the worship of the redeemed.

This appears still more clearly in the new song that they sing, " Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof, for thou hast redeemed us TO God BY THY BLOOD, out of every kindred, and tongue, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests " (Rev. v. 9 and 10).

Or in words somewhat different, used by the Apostle in the beginning of the book, where he, under the impression of all that he had seen and heard in heaven concerning the place which the Lamb occupied, at the first mention of the name of the Lord Jesus, cried out, " Unto him that loved us and WASHED US FROM OUR SINS IN HIS OWN BLOOD, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever, Amen." (Rev. i. 5 and 6).

Without ceasing, the blood of the Lamb continues to be the power to awaken the saved, to their song of joy and thanksgiving ; because in the death of the Cross the sacrifice took place in which He gave Himself for them, and won them for Himself; because, also, the blood is the eternal seal of what He did, and of the love which moved Him to do it, it remains also the inexhaustible, overflowing fountain of heavenly bliss.

That we may the better understand this, notice the expression: " Him that loved us and washed us from our sins IN HIS OWN BLOOD." In all our consideration about the blood of Jesus, we have had till now no occasion intentionally to stop there. And of all the glorious things which the blood means, this is one of the most glorious-His blood is the sign, the measure, yes, the impartation of His love. Each application of His blood, each time that He causes the soul to experience its power, is a fresh outflowing of His wonderful love. The full experience of the power of the blood in eternity will be nothing else than the full revelation of how He gave Himself up for us, and gives Himself to us, in a love eternal, unending, incomprehensible-as God Himself.

"Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood." This love is indeed incomprehensible. What has not that love moved Him to do ? He gave Himself for us; He became sin for us; He was made a curse for us. Who would dare to use such language, who could ever have dared to think such a thing if God had not revealed it to us by His Spirit ? That He really gave Himself up for us, not because it was laid upon Him to do so, but by the impulse of a love that really longed for us, that we might for ever be identified with Him. Because it is such a divine wonder, therefore we feel it so little. But, blessed be the Lord ! there is a time coming when we shall feel it, when under the ceaseless and immediate love-sharing of the heavenly life, we shall be filled and satisfied with that love. Yes, praised be the Lord ! even here on earth there is hope that through a better knowledge of, and more perfect trust in the blood, the Spirit will more powerfully shed abroad "the love of God in our hearts." There is nothing to prevent our hearts being filled with the love of the Lamb, and our mouths with His praise here on earth,

by faith, as is done in heaven by sight. Each experience of the power of the blood will become increasingly an experience of the love of Jesus.

It has been said that it is not desirable to lay too much emphasis on the word " blood " ; that it sounds coarse, and the thought expressed by it can be conveyed in a way more in accordance with our modern habit of speaking or thinking.

I must acknowledge that I do not share in this view. I receive that word as coming, not just from John, but from the Lord Himself. I am deeply convinced that the word chosen by the Spirit of God, and by Him made living and filled with the power of that eternal life whence the song containing it comes to us, carries in itself a power of blessing surpassing our understanding. Changing the expression into our way of thinking has all the imperfection of a human translation. He who desires to know and experience " what the Spirit says unto the churches " will accept the word by faith, as having come from heaven, as the word in which the joy and power of eternal life is enfolded in a most peculiar manner. Those expressions, " THY BLOOD," and " THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB " will make " THE HOLIEST," the place of God's glory, resound eternally with the joyful notes of " The New Song."

Heavenly joy through THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB: that will be the portion of all, here on earth, who with undivided heart yield to its power; and of all above, in heaven, who have become worthy to take a place among the multitude around the throne.

My Comrades in Redemption! we have learned what those in heaven say, and how they sing about the blood. Let us pray earnestly that these tidings may have the effect on us, which our Lord intended. We have seen that to live a real heavenly life it is necessary to abide in the full power of the blood. The blood bestows the right to enter heaven.

As the blood of RECONCILIATION it works out in the soul the full, living consciousness which belongs to those who are at home in heaven. It brings us really into " THE HOLIEST," near to God. It makes us fit for heaven.

As the CLEANSING BLOOD it delivers from the lust and power of sin, and preserves us in the fellowship of the light and life of the Holy God. The blood inspires the song of praise in heaven. As the blood of the Lamb " who loved us and gave himself for us " it speaks not only of WHAT He has done for us, but chiefly of HIM who has done all. In the blood, we have the most perfect impartation of Himself. He who by faith gives himself up to experience, to the full, what the blood is able to do, will soon find an entrance into a life of happy singing of praise, and love, that heaven itself, alone, can surpass.

My Comrades in Redemption ! this life is for you and me. May THE BLOOD BE ALL OUR GLORY, not only at the Cross with its awful wonders, but also at the Throne. Let us plunge deep, and ever deeper, into the living fountain of the blood of the Lamb. Let us open our hearts wide, and ever wider, for its operation. Let us firmly, and ever more firmly, believe in the ceaseless CLEANSING by which the Great Eternal Priest Himself will apply that blood to us. Let us pray with burning, and ever more burning, desire that nothing, yes, nothing, may be in our heart that does not experience the power of the blood. Let us unite joyfully, and ever more joyfully, in the song of the great multitude, who know of nothing so glorious as this-" Thou hast redeemed us to God, by thy blood."

May our life on earth become what it ought to be, O OUR BELOVED LORD I one ceaseless song to x` Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in leis own blood " " and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his

Father."

"To him be the glory and dominion for ever and ever." Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

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The Spirit of Christ

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PREFACE

In olden times believers met God, knew Him, walked with Him, had the clear and full consciousness that they had dealings with the God of heaven, and had, too, through faith, the assurance that they and their lives were well pleasing to Him. When the Son of God came to earth, and revealed the Father, it was that such intercourse with God, and the assurance of His favour, might become clearer, and be the abiding portion of every child of God. When He was exalted to the Throne of Glory, it was that He might send down into our hearts the Holy Spirit, in whom the Father and the Son have their own blessed life in heaven, to maintain in us, in Divine power, the blessed life of fellowship with God. It was to be one of the marks of the New Covenant that each member of it should walk in personal communion with God. ' They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least to the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity! 'The personal fellowship and knowledge of God in the Holy Spirit was to be the fruit of the pardon of sin. The Spirit of God's own Son, sent into our hearts to do each moment a work as Divine as the work of the Son in redeeming us, to displace our life and replace it by the life of Christ in power, to make the Son of God divinely and consciously present with us always--this was what the Father had promised as the distinctive blessing of the New Testament. The fellowship of God as the ThreeOne was now to be within us; the Spirit revealing the Son in us, and through Him the Father.

That there are but few believers who realize this walk with God, this life in God, such as their Father has prepared for them, no one will deny. Nor will it admit of dispute what the cause of this failure is, It is acknowledged on all hands that the Holy Spirit, through whose Divine Omnipotence this inner revelation of the Son and the Father in the life and the likeness of the believer is to take place is not known or acknowledged in the Church as He should be. In our preaching and in our practice He does not hold that place of prominence which He has in God's plan and in His promises. While our creed on the Holy Spirit is orthodox and scriptural, His presence and power in the life of believers, in the ministry of the word, in the witness of the Church to the world, is not what the word promises or God's plan requires.

There are not a few who are conscious of this great need, and earnestly ask to know God's mind concerning it, and the way of deliverance out of it. Some feel that their own life is not what it should and might be. Many of them can look back to some special season of spiritual revival, when their whole life was apparently lifted to a higher level. The experience of the joy and strength of the Saviour's presence, as they learned that He would keep them trusting, was, for a time, most real and blessed. But it did not last: there was a very gradual decline to a lower stage, with much of vain effort and sad failure. They would fain know where the evil lies. There can be little doubt that the answer must be this: they did not know or honour the Indwelling Spirit as the strength of their life, as the power of their faith, to keep them always looking to Jesus and trusting in Him. They knew not what it was, day by day, to wait in lowly reverence for the Holy Spirit to deliver from the power of the flesh, and to maintain the wonderful presence of the Father and the Son within them.

There are many more, tens of thousands of God's dear children, who as yet know little of any even temporary experiences of a brighter life than one of never-ending stumbling and rising. They have lived outside of revivals and conferences; the teaching they receive is not specially helpful in the matter of entire consecration. Their surroundings are not favourable to the growth of the spiritual life. There is many an hour of earnest longing to live

more according to the will of God, but the prospect of its being really possible to walk and please God, worthy of the Lord to all well pleasing has hardly dawned upon them. To the best part of their birthright as God's children, to the most precious gift of the Father's love in Christ, the gift of the Holy Spirit, to dwell in them, and to lead them, they are practically strangers.

I would indeed count it an unspeakable privilege if my God would use me to bring to these His beloved children the question of His Word: 'Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?' and then to tell them the blessed news of what that glorious work is which this Spirit, whom they have within them, is able to do in each of them. I would if I might, show them what it is that has hitherto hindered that Spirit from doing His blessed work, and how divinely simple the path is by which each upright soul can enter into the joy of all that He has been given to work within us, even the full revelation of the presence of the Indwelling Jesus. I have humbly, asked my God that He would give, even in my feeble words, the quickening of His Holy Spirit, that through them the Thoughts and the Truth, the Love and the Power of God, may enter and shine into the hearts of many of His children, and bring in blessed reality and experience the wondrous Gift of Love of which they tell--the Life and the Joy of the Holy Ghost, as He brings nigh and glorifies within them that Jesus whom hitherto they have only known at a distance, high above them.

I must confess to having had still another wish. I have strong fears-I desire to say it in deep humility-that in the theology of our Churches the Teaching and Leading of the Spirit of Truth, the anointing which alone teacheth all things, has not practical recognition which a Holy God demands, which our Saviour meant Him to have. In everything that concerns the Word of God, and the chuch of Christ, and the work of Saving Love to be done on the earth in the name of Christ, it was meant that the Holy Spirit should have the same and supreme place of honour that He had in the Church of the Acts of the Apostles. If the leaders of our church-thought and church-councils, our professors of theology and our commentators, if our ministers and students, our religious writers and workers, were all fully conscious of this fact, surely the signs of that honour given and accepted, marks of His Holy Presence would be clearer, His mighty works more manifest. I trust it has not been presumptuous in me to hope that what has been written may help to remind even our Masters in Israel of what is so easily overlooked , that the first, the indispensable requirement for what is really to bear fruit for eternity is, that it be full of the power of the Eternal Spirit.

I am well aware that it is expected of what asks the attention of our men of mind and culture, our "scientific theologians, that it shall bear such marks of scholarship, of force of thought and power of expression, as I cannot dare to lay claim to. And yet I venture to ask any of these honoured brethren under whose eyes these lines may come, to regard the book, if in no other aspect, at least as the echo of a cry for light rising from ten thousand hearts, as the statement of questions for the solution of which many are longing. There is a deep feeling abroad that the Scripture ideal, that Christ's own promise of what the Church should be, and its actual state, do not correspond.

Of all questions in theology there is none that leads us more deeply into the glory of God, or that is of more intense vital and practical importance for daily life, than that which deals with what is the consummation and culmination of the Revelation of God and the work of Redemption: in what way and to what extent God's Holy Spirit can dwell in, can fill, can make into a holy and beautiful temple of God, the heart of His child, with Christ reigning there, as an Ever-present and Almighty Saviour. It is the question in theology of which the solution, if it were sought and found in the presence and teaching of the Spirit Himself, would transform all our theology into that knowledge of God which is eternal life.

Of theology, in every possible shape, we have no lack. But it is as if, with all our writing, and preaching, and

working, there is something wanting. Is not the power from on high the one thing we lack ? May it not be that, with all our love for Christ and labour for His cause, we have not made the chief object of our desire what was the chief object of His heart when He ascended the throne--have His disciples as a company of men waiting the clothing with the power of the Holy Ghost, that in that power of the felt presence of their Lord they might testify of Him? May God raise from among our theologians many who shall give their lives to secure for God's Holy Spirit His recognition in the lives of believers, in the ministry try of the word by tongue and pen, in all the work done in His Church.

I have noticed with deep interest a call to union in prayer, in the first place, 'that Christian life and teaching may be increasingly subject to the Holy Ghost.' I believe that one of the first blessings of this united prayer will be to direct attention to the reason why such prayer is not more evidently answered, and to the true preparation for receiving an abundant answer. In my reading in connection with this subject, in my observation of the lives of believers, and in my personal experience, I have been very deeply impressed with one thought. It is, that our prayer for the mighty working of the Holy Spirit through us and around us can only be powerfully answered as His indwelling in every believer is more clearly acknowledged and lived out. We have the Holy Spirit within us: only he who is faithful in the lesser will receive the greater. 'As we first yield ourselves to be led by the Spirit, to confess His presence in us; as believers rise to realize and accept His guidance in all their daily life; will our God be willing to entrust to us larger measures of His mighty workings. If we give ourselves entirely into His power, as our life, ruling within us, He will give Himself to us in taking a more complete possession, to work through us.

If there is one thing I desire, it is that the Lord may use what I have written to make clear and impress this one truth: it is as an Indwelling Life that the Holy Spirit must be known. In a living, adoring faith, the Indwelling must be accepted and treasured, until it become part of the consciousness of the new man: The Holy Spirit possesses me. In this faith the whole life, even to the least things, must be surrendered to His leading, while all that is of the flesh or self is crucified and put to death. If in this faith we wait on God for His Divine leading and working, placing ourselves entirely at His disposal our prayer cannot remain unheard; there will be operations and manifestations of the Spirit's power in the Church and the world such as we could not dare to hope. The Holy Spirit only demands vessels entirely set apart to Him. He will delight to manifest the glory of Christ our Lord.

I commit each beloved fellow-believer to the teaching of the Holy Spirit. May we all, as we study His work, be partakers of the anointing which teacheth all things.

ANDREW MURRAY.

WELLINGTON, CAPE OF GOOD HOPE

15th August 1888.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 1

A New Spirit, and God's Spirit.

A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. And I will put my Spirit within you.' -Ezekiel 36: 26, 27.

GOD has revealed Himself in two great dispensations. In the Old we have the, time of promise and preparation, in the New that of fulfilment and possession.' In harmony with the difference of the two dispensations, there is a two fold working of God's Spirit. In the Old Testament we have the Spirit of God coming upon men, and working on them in special times and ways, working from above and without, inwards. In the New we have the Holy Spirit entering them and dwelling within them, working from within, outwards and upwards. In the former we have the Spirit of God as the Almighty and Holy One; in the latter we have the Spirit of the Father of Jesus Christ.

The difference between the twofold, operation of the Holy Spirit is not to be regarded as if, with the closing of the Old Testament, the former ceased,and there was in the New no more of the work of preparation. By no means. Just as there were in the Old blessed anticipations of the indwelling of God's Spirit, so now in the New Testament the twofold working still continues. According to the lack of knowledge, or of faith, or - of faithfulness, a believer may even in these days get little beyond the Old Testament measure of the Spirit's working. The indwelling Spirit has indeed been given to every child of God, and yet he may experience little beyond the first half of the promise, the new spirit given us in regeneration, and know almost nothing of God's own Spirit, as a living person put within us. The Spirit's work in convincing of sin and of righteousness, in His leading to repentance and faith and the new life, is but the preparatory work. The distinctive glory of the dispensation of the Spirit is His Divine personal indwelling in the heart of the believer, there to reveal the Father and the Son. It is only as Christians understand and remember this, that they will be able to claim the full blessing prepared for them in Christ Jesus.

In the words of Ezekiel we find, in the one promise, this twofold blessing God bestows through His Spirit very strikingly set forth. The first is, 'I will put within you a new spirit,' that is, man's own spirit is to be renewed and quickened by the work of God's Spirit. When this has been done, then there is the second blessing, ' I will put my Spirit within you,' to dwell in that new spirit, Where God is to dwell, He must have a habitation. With Adam He had to create a body before He could breathe the spirit of life into him. In Israel the tabernacle and the temple had to be built and completed before God could come down and take possession. And just so a new heart is given, and a new spirit put within us, as the indispensable condition of God's own Spirit being given to dwell within us. The difference is the same we find in David's prayer. First, 'Create in me a clean heart, 0 God ! and renew a right spirit within me;' then, 'Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.' Or what is indicated in the words, 'That which is born of the spirit is spirit :' there is the Divine Spirit begetting, and the new spirit begotten by Him. So the two are also distinguished, 'God's Spirit beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God! Our spirit is the renewed regenerate spirit; dwelling in this, and yet to be distinguished from it, is God's Holy Spirit, witnessing in, with, and through it.'

The importance of recognising this distinction can easily be perceived. We shall then be able to understand the

true relation between regeneration and the indwelling of the Spirit. The former is that work of the Holy Spirit, by which He convinces us of sin, leads to repentance and faith in Christ, and imparts a new nature. Through the Spirit God thus fulfils the promise, "I will put a new spirit within you.' The believer is now a child of God, a temple ready for the Spirit to dwellin. Where faith claims it, the second half of the promise is fulfilled as surely as the first. As long now as the believer only looks at regeneration, and the renewal wrought in his spirit, he will not come to the life of joy and strength which is meant for him. But when he accepts God's promise that there is something better than even the new nature, than the inner temple, that there is the Spirit of the Father and the Son to dwell within him, there opens up a wonderful prospect of holiness and blessedness. It becomes his one great desire to know this Holy Spirit aright, how He works and what He asks, to know how he may to the full experience His indwelling, and that revelation of the Son of God within us which it is His work to bestow.

The question will be asked, How these two parts of the Divine promise are fulfilled ? simultaneously or successively ? The answer is very simple: From God's side the twofold gift is simultaneous. The Spirit is not divided: in giving the Spirit, God gives Himself and all He is. So it was on the day of Pentecost. The three thousand received the new spirit, with repentance and faith, and then, when they had been baptized, the Indwelling Spirit, as God's seal to their faith, on one day. Through the word of disciples, the Spirit, which had come upon them, wrought mightily on the multitude, changing disposition and heart and spirit. When, in the power of this new spirit working in them, they had believed and confessed, they received the baptism of Holy Spirit to abide in them. And so still in times when the Spirit of God moves mightily, and the Church is living in the power of the Spirit, the children which are begotten of her receive from the first beginnings of their Christian life the distinct conscious sealing and indwelling of the Spirit. And yet we have indications in Scripture that there may be circumstances, dependent either on the enduement of the preacher or the faith of the bears in which the two halves of the promise are not so closely linked. So it was with the believers in Samaria converted under Philip's preaching; and so too with the converts Paul met at Ephesus. In their case was repeated the experience of the apostles themselves. We regard them as regenerate men before our Lord's death ; it was only at Pentecost that the promise was fulfilled, 'He shall be in you!' What was seen in them, just as in the Old and New Testaments,-the grace of the Spirit divided into two separate manifestations,-may still take place in our day. When, the standard of spiritual life in a Church is sickly and low, when neither in the preaching of the word nor in the testimony of believers, the glorious truth of an Indwelling Spirit is distinctly proclaimed, we must not wonder if, even where God gives His Spirit, He be known and experienced only as the Spirit of regeneration. His Indwelling Presence will remain a mystery. In the gift of God, the Spirit of Christ in all His fulness is bestowed once for all as an Indwelling Spirit; but He is received and possessed only as far as the faith of the believer reaches.

It is generally admitted in the Church that the Holy Spirit has - not the recognition which becomes Him as being the equal of the Father and the Son, the Divine Person through whom alone the Father and the Son can be truly possessed and known, in whom alone the Church has her beauty and her blessedness. In the Reformation, of blessed memory, the Gospel of Christ had to be vindicated from the terrible misapprehension which makes man's righteousness the ground of his acceptance, and the freeness of Divine grace had to be maintained. To the ages that followed was committed the trust of building on that foundation, and developing what the riches of grace would do for the believer through the indwelling of the Spirit of Jesus. The Church rested too content in what it had received, and the teaching of all that the Holy Spirit will be to each believer in His guiding, sanctifying, strengthening power, has never yet taken the place it ought to have in our evangelical teaching and living.

And there is many an earnest Christian who will in the confession lately made by a young believer of intelligence: I think I understand the work of the Father and the Son, and rejoice in them, but I hardly see the place the Spirit has. Let us unite with all who are pleading that God in power may grant mighty Spirit workings in His Church, that each child of God may prove that in him the double promise is fulfilled: I will give a new spirit within you,

and I will give my Spirit within you. Let us pray that we may so apprehend the wonderful blessing of the Indwelling Spirit, as to turn inward and have our whole inmost being opened up for this, the full revelation of the Father's love and the grace of Jesus.

'Within you ! ' Within you ! This twice-repeated word of our text is one of the keywords of the 'New Covenant. ' I will put my law in their inward parts, 'and in their heart will I write it.' I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.' God created man's heart for His dwelling. Sin entered, and defiled it. Four thousand years God's Spirit strove and wrought to regain possession. In the Incarnation and Atonement of Christ the Redemption was accomplished, and the kingdom of God established. Jesus could say, 'The kingdom of God is come unto you;' 'the kingdom of God is within you.' It is within we must look for the fulfilment of the New Covenant, the Covenant not of ordinances but of life: in the power of an endless life the law and the fear of God are to be given in our heart: the Spirit of Christ Himself is to be within us as the power of our life. Not only on Calvary, or in the resurrection, or on the throne, is the glory of Christ the Conqueror to be seen,-but in our heart: within us, within us is to be the true display of the reality and the glory of His Redemption. Within us, in our inmost parts, is the hidden sanctuary where is the ark of the Covenant, sprinkled with the Blood, and containing the Law written in an ever-living writing by the Indwelling Spirit, and where, through the Spirit, the Father and the Son now come to dwell.

0 my God! I do thank Thee for this double blessing. I thank Thee for that wonderful holy temple Thou hast built up in me for Thyself-a new spirit given within me. And I thank Thee for that still more wonderful Holy Presence, Thine Own Spirit, to dwell within me, and there reveal the Father and the Son.

0 my God! I do pray Thee to open mine eyes for this the mystery of Thy love. Let Thy words, within you,' bow me low in trembling fear before Thy condescension, and may my one desire be to have my spirit indeed the worthy dwelling of Thy Spirit. Let them lift me up in holy trust and expectation, to look for and claim all that Thy promise means.

0 my Father!, I thank Thee that Thy Spirit doth dwell in me. I pray Thee, let His indwelling :be in power, in the living fellowship with Thyself, in the growing experience of His renewing power, in the ever fresh anointing that witnesses to His Presence, and the indwelling of my Glorified Lord Jesus. May my daily walk be in the deep reverence of His Holy Presence within me, and the glad experience of all He works. Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 2

The Baptism of the Spirit

'John bare witness, saying, He that sent me to baptize with water, He said unto me, Upon Whomsoever thou shalt see the, Spirit descending, and abiding on Him the same is He that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit.' John 1:33

THERE were two things that John the Baptist preached concerning the person of Christ, The one was, that He was the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world The other, that He would baptize His disciples with the Holy Ghost and with fire. The Blood of the Lamb, and the Baptism of the Spirit were the two central truths of his creed and his preaching. They are,indeed, inseparable: the Church cannot do her work in power, nor can her exalted Lord be glorified in her, except as the Blood as the foundation-stone, and the Spirit as the corner-stone, are fully preached.

This has not at all times been done even among those who heartily accept Scripture as their guide.The preaching of the Lamb of God, of His suffering and atonement, of pardon and peace through Him, is more easily apprehended by the understanding of man, and can more speedily influence his feelings, than the more inward spiritual truth of the baptism, and indwelling, and guidance of the Holy Spirit. The pouring out of the blood took place upon earth, it was something visible and outward, and, in virtue of the types, not unintelligible. The pouring out of the Spirit was in heaven, a Divine and hidden mystery. The shedding of the blood was for the ungodly and rebellious; the gift of the Spirit, for the loving and obedient disciple. It is no wonder, when the life of the Church is not in very intense devotion to her Lord, that the preaching and the faith of the Baptism of the Spirit should find less entrance than that of redemption and forgiveness.

And yet God would not have it so. The Old Testament Promise had spoken of God's Spirit within us.The forerunner at once took up the strain,and did not preach the Atoning Lamb without telling whereunto it was that we were to be redeemed, and how God's high purpose was to be fulfilled in us. Sin was not only guilt and condemnation; it was defilement and death. It had incurred not only the loss of God's favor it had made us unfit for the Divine fellowship. And without this the wonderful love that had created man could not be content. God wanted really to have us for Himself, -our hearts and affections, yea, our inmost personality, our very self, a home for His love to rest in, a temple for His worship. The preaching of John included both the beginning and the end of redemption: the blood of the Lamb was to cleanse God's Temple and restore His Throne within the heart; nothing less than the Baptism and Indwelling of the Spirit could satisfy the heart of either God or man.

Of what that Baptism of the Spirit meant, Jesus Himself was to be the type : He would only give what He Himself had received: because the Spirit abode on Him, He could baptize with the Spirit. And what did the Spirit descending and abiding on Him mean? He had been begotten of the Holy Spirit; in the power of the Spirit He had grown up a holy child and youth, had entered manhood free from sin, and had now come to John to give Himself to fulfil all righteousness in submitting to the baptism of repentance. And now, as the reward of His obedience, as the Father's seal of approval on His having thus far yielded to the control of the Spirit, He receives a new communication of the Power of the Heavenly Life. Beyond what -He had yet experienced, the Father's conscious

indwelling presence and power takes possession of Him, and fits Him for His work. The leading and the power of the Spirit become His more consciously (Luke 4: 1, 14, 22) than before; He is now anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power.

But though now baptized Himself, He cannot yet baptize others. He must first, in the power of His baptism, meet temptation and overcome it; must learn obedience and suffer, yea, through the Eternal Spirit, offer Himself a sacrifice unto God and His will,--then only would He afresh receive the Holy Spirit as the reward of obedience (Acts 2: 33), with the power to baptize all who belong to Him.

What we see in Jesus teaches us what the baptism of the Spirit is. It is not. that grace by which we turn to God, become regenerate, and seek to live as God's children. When Jesus reminded His disciples (Acts 1: 4) of John's prophecy, they were already partakers of this grace. Their baptism with the Spirit meant something more. It was to be to them the conscious presence of their glorified Lord, come back from heaven to dwell in their hearts, their participation in the power of His new Life. It was to them a baptism of joy and power in their living fellowship with Jesus on the Throne of Glory. All that they were further to receive of wisdom, and courage, and holiness, had its root in this: what the Spirit had been to Jesus, when He was baptized, as the living bond with the Father's Power and Presence, He was to be to them: through Him, the Son was to manifest Himself, and Father and Son were to make their abode with them. 'Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon Him, the same is He that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit.' This word comes to us as well as to John. To know what the baptism of the Spirit means, how and from whom we are to receive it we must see the One upon whom the Spirit descended and abode. We must see Jesus baptized with the Holy Ghost. We must try to understand how He needed it, how He was prepared for it, how He yielded to it, how in its power He died His death, and was raised again. What Jesus has to give us, He first received and personally appropriated for Himself ; what He received and won for Himself is all for us: He will make it our very own. Upon whom we see the Spirit abiding, He baptizeth with the Spirit.

In regard to this baptism of the Spirit there are questions that we may not find it easy to answer, and to which all will not give the same answer. Was the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost the complete fulfilment of the promise, and is that the only baptism of the Spirit, given once for all to the newborn Church ? Or is not the coming of the Holy Spirit on the disciples in the fourth of Acts, on the Samaritans (Acts 8), on the heathen in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10.), and on the twelve disciples at Ephesus (Acts 19), also to be regarded as separate fulfilments of the words, 'He shall baptize with the Holy Ghost'? Is the sealing of the Spirit given to each believer in regeneration to be counted by him as his baptism of the Spirit ? Or is it, as some say, a distinct, definite blessing to be received later on ? Is it a blessing given only once, or can it be repeated and renewed ? -In the course of our study we shall find light in God's word that may help us to a solution of difficulties like these. But it is of great consequence that at the outset we should not allow ourselves to be occupied with points as these, which are after all of minor importance, but fix our whole hearts on the great spiritual lessons that God would have us learn from the preaching of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. These are specially two.

The one is, that this baptism of the Holy Spirit is the crown and glory of Jesus' work, that we need it, and must know that we have it, if we are to live the true Christian life. We need it. The Holy Jesus needed it. Christ's loving, obedient disciples needed it. It is something more than the working of the Spirit in regeneration. It is the Personal Spirit of Christ making Him present within us, always abiding in the heart in the power of His glorified nature, as He is exalted above every enemy. It is the Spirit of the Life of Christ Jesus making us free from the law of sin and death, and bringing us, as a personal experience, into the liberty from sin to which Christ redeemed us, but which to so many regenerate is only a blessing registered, on their behalf, but not possessed or enjoyed. It is the enduement with power to fill us with boldness in presence of every danger, and give the victory over the

world and every enemy. It is the fulfilment of what God meant in His promise - I will dwell in them, and walk in them. Let us ask the Father to reveal to us all that His love meant for us, until our souls are filled with the glory of the thought: He baptizeth with the Holy Spirit.

And then there is the other lesson: It is Jesus who thus baptizeth. Whether we look upon this baptism as something we already have, and of which we only want a fuller apprehension, or something we still must receive, in this all agree : it is only in the fellowship of Jesus, in faithful attachment and obedience to Him, that a baptized life can be received or maintained or renewed. 'He that believeth in me,' Jesus, said, 'out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.' The one thing we need is living faith in the indwelling Jesus: the living water will surely and freely flow. Faith is the instinct of the new nature, by which it recognises and receives its Divine food and drink. In the power of the Spirit who dwells in every believer, let us trust Jesus, who fills with the Spirit, and cling to Him in love and obedience. It is He who baptizes: in contact with Him, in devotion to Him, in the confidence that He has given and will give Himself wholly to us, let us look to Him for nothing less than all that the baptism of the Spirit can imply.

In doing so let us specially remember one thing: only he that is faithful in the least will be made ruler over much. Be very faithful to what thou already hast and knowest of the Spirit's working. Regard thyself with deep reverence as God's holy temple. Wait for and listen to the gentlest whispering of God's Spirit within thee. Listen especially to the conscience, which has been cleansed in the blood. Keep that conscience very clean by simple childlike obedience. In thy heart there may be much involuntary sin, with which thou feelest thyself powerless. Humble thyself deeply for thy inbred corruption, strengthened as it has been by actual sin. Let every rising, of such sin be cleansed in the blood.

But in regard to thy voluntary actions say, day by day, to thy Lord Jesus, that everything thou knowest to be pleasing to Him thou wilt do.Yield to the reproofs of conscience when thou failest; but come again, have hope in God, and renew the vow: What I know God wants me to do, I will do. Ask humbly every morning, and wait, for guidance in thy path; the Spirit's voice will become better known, and His strength will be felt. Jesus had His disciples three years in His baptism class, and then the blessing came. Be His loving, obedient disciple, and believe in Him on whom the Spirit abode, and who is full of the Spirit, and thou too shalt be prepared for the fulness of the blessing of the baptism of the Spirit.

Blessed Lord Jesus! with my whole heart I worship Thee, as exalted on the Throne to baptize with the Holy Ghost. Oh! reveal Thyself to me in this Thy glory, that I may rightly know what I may expect from Thee.

I bless Thee that in Thyself I have seen what the preparation is for receiving the Holy Spirit in His fulness. During Thy life of preparation in Nazareth for Thy work, 0 my Lord, the Spirit was always in Thee. And yet when Thou hadst surrendered Thyself to fulfil all righteousness, and to enter into fellowship with the sinners Thou camest to save, in partaking of their baptism, Thou didst receive from the Father a new inflowing of His Holy Spirit. It was to Thee the seal of His love, the revelation of His indwelling, the power for His service. And now Thou, on whom we see the Spirit descend and abide, doest for us what the Father did for Thee.

My Holy Lord I bless Thee that the Holy Spirit is in me too. But, oh I beseech Thee, give me yet the full, the overflowing measure Thou hast promised. Let Him be to me the full unceasing revelation of Thy presence in my heart, as glorious and as mighty as on the Throne of Heaven. 0 my 'Lord Jesus! baptize me, fill me with the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 3

Worship in the Spirit

'The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth; for such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth.'--John 4: 23, 24.

'We are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Phil. 3: 3.

To worship is man's highest glory. He was created for fellowship with God: of that fellowship worship is the sublimest expression. All the exercises of the religious life meditation and prayer, love and faith, surrender and obedience,all culminate in worship. Recognising what God is in His holiness, His glory, and His love, realizing what I am as a sinful creature, and as the Father's redeemed child, in worship I gather up my whole being and present myself to my God, to offer Him the adoration and the glory which is His due. The truest and fullest and nearest approach to God is worship. Every sentiment and every service of the religious life is included in it: to worship is man's highest destiny, because in it God is all.

Jesus tells us that with His coming a new worship would commence. All that heathen or Samaritans had called worship, all even that the Jews had known of worship in accordance with the provisional revelation of God's law, would make way for something entirely and distinctively new--the worship in Spirit and in Truth. This is the worship He was to inaugurate by the giving of the Holy Spirit. This is the worship which now alone is well pleasing to the Father. It is for this worship specially that we have received the Holy Spirit. Let us, at the very commencement of our study of the work of the Spirit, take in the blessed thought that the great object for which the Holy Spirit is within us is, that we worship in spirit and in truth. 'Such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers,'-for this He sent forth His Son and His Spirit.

In Spirit. When God created man a living soul, that soul, as the seat and organ of his personality and consciousness, was linked, on the one side, through the body, with the outer visible world, on the other side, through the spirit, with the unseen and the Divine. The soul had to decide whether it would yield itself to the spirit, by it to be linked with God and His will, or to the body and the solicitations of the visible. In the fall, the soul refused the rule of the spirit, and became the slave of the body with its appetites. Man became flesh; the spirit lost its destined place of rule, and became little more than a dormant power; it was now no longer the ruling principle, but a struggling captive. And the spirit now stands in opposition to the flesh, the name for the life of soul and body together, in their subjection to sin.

When speaking of the unregenerate man in contrast with the spiritual (1 Cor. 2:14), Paul calls him psychical, soullish, or animal, having only the natural life. The life of the soul comprehends all our moral and intellectual faculties, as they may even be directed towards the things of God, apart from the renewal of the Divine Spirit. Because the soul is under the power of the flesh, man is spoken of as having become flesh, as being flesh. As the

body consists of flesh and bone, and the flesh is that part of it which is specially endowed with sensitiveness, and through which we receive our sensations from the outer world, the flesh denotes human nature, as it has become subject to the world of sense. And because the whole soul has thus come under the power of the flesh, the Scripture speaks of all the attributes of the soul as belonging to the flesh, and being under its power. So it contrasts, in reference to religion and worship, the two principles from which they may proceed. There is a fleshly wisdom and a spiritual wisdom (1 Cor.2: 12 ; Col. 1: 9). There is a service of God trusting in the flesh and glorying in the flesh, and a service of God by the spirit (Phil. 3:3, 4; Gal. 6: 13).

There is a fleshly mind and a spiritual mind (Col.2: 18, 1: 9). There is a will of the flesh, and a will which is of God working by His Spirit (John 1:13 ; Phil. 2:13). There is a worship which is a satisfying of the flesh, because it is in the power of what flesh can do (Col.2: 18, 23), and a worship of God which is in the Spirit. It is this worship Jesus came to make possible, and to realize in us, by giving a new spirit in our inmost part, and then, within that, God's Holy Spirit.

'In Spirit and in Truth.' Such a worship in Spirit is worship in Truth. Just as the words in Spirit do not mean internal as contrasted with external observances, but Spiritual, inwrought by God's Spirit, as opposed to what man's natural power can effect, so the words in Truth do not mean hearty, sincere, upright. In all the worship of the Old Testament saints, they knew that God sought Truth in the inward parts; they sought Him with their whole hearts, and most uprightly,and yet they attained not to that worship in Spirit and Truth, which Jesus brought us when He rent the vail of the flesh. Truth here means the substance, the reality, the actual possession of all that the worship of God implies, both in what it demands and what it promises. John speaks of Jesus as 'the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.' And he adds, 'For the Law was given by Moses ; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.' If we take truth as opposed to falsehood, the law of Moses was just as true as the Gospel of Jesus; they both came from God. But if we understand what it means, that the law gave only a shadow of ' good things to come, and that Christ brought us the things themselves, their very substance, we see how He was full of truth, because He was Himself the Truth, the reality, the very Life and Love and Power of God imparting itself to us. We then also see how it is only a worship in Spirit that can be a worship in Truth, in the actual enjoyment of that Divine Power, which is Christ's own life and fellowship with the Father, revealed and maintained within us by the Holy Spirit.

'The true worshippers worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth.' All worshippers are not true worshippers. There may be a great deal of earnest honest worship without its being worship in Spirit and in Truth. The mind may be intensely occupied, the feelings may be deeply moved, the will may be mightily roused, while yet there is but little of the Spiritual Worship which stands in the Truth of God. There may be great attachment to Bible truth, and yet through the predominating activity of that which cometh not from God's working but from man's effort, it may not be the Christ--given, Spirit-breathed worship which God seeks. There must be accordance, harmony, unity between God, who is a Spirit, and the worshippers drawing near in the Spirit. Such doth the Father seek to worship Him. The Infinite, Perfect, Holy Spirit which God the Father is, must have some reflection in the spirit which is in the child.

And this can only be as the Spirit of God dwells in us. If we would strive to become such worshippers in Spirit and in Truth,-true worshippers,-the first thing we need is a sense of the danger in which we are from the Flesh and its worship. As believers we have in us a double nature-flesh and spirit. The one is the natural part which is ever ready to intrude itself, and to undertake the doing of what is needed in the Worship of God. The other is the Spiritual part, which may still be very weak, and which possibly we do not yet know how to give its full sway. Our mind may delight in the study of God's Word, our feelings may be moved by the wonderful thoughts there revealed, our will may--we see this in Rom.7: 22--delight in the law of God after the inward man, and we may yet

be impotent to do that law, to render the obedience and worship we see and approve.

We need the Holy Spirit's indwelling for life and worship alike. And to receive this we need first of all to have the flesh silenced. 'Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord.' 'Let no flesh glory in His presence.' To Peter had already been revealed by the Father that Jesus was the Christ, and yet in his thoughts of the cross he savoured not, his mind was not according to, the things of God, but the things of men. Our own thoughts of Divine things, our own efforts to waken or work the right feelings must be given up, our own power to worship must be brought down and laid low, and every approach to God must take place under a very distinct and very quiet surrender to the Holy Spirit. And as we learn how impossible it is at our will any moment to ensure the Spirit's working, we shall learn that if we would worship in the Spirit we must walk in the Spirit. 'Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.' As the Spirit dwells and rules in me, I am in the Spirit, and can worship in the Spirit.

'The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth. For such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers.' Yes, the Father seeks such worshippers, and what He seeks He finds, because He Himself works it. That we might be such worshippers, He sent His own Son to seek and to save the lost; to save us with this salvation, that we should become His true worshippers, who enter in through the rent veil of the flesh, and worship Him in the Spirit. And then He sent the Spirit of His Son, the Spirit of Christ, to be in us the Truth and Reality of what Christ had been, His actual presence, to communicate within us the very life that Christ had lived. Blessed be God! the hour has come, and is now, we are living in it this very moment, that the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth. Let us believe it; the Spirit has been given, and dwells within us, for this one reason, because the Father seeks such worshippers. Let us rejoice in the confidence that we can attain to it, we can be true worshippers, because the Holy Spirit has been given.

Let us realize in holy fear and awe that He dwells within us. Let us humbly, in the silence of the flesh, yield ourselves to His leading and teaching. Let us wait in faith before God for His workings. And let us practise this worship. Let every new insight into what the work of the Spirit means, every exercise of faith in His indwelling or experience of His working, terminate in this as its highest glory: the adoring worship of the Father, the giving Him the Praise, the Thanks, the Honour, and Love which are His alone.

0 God ! Thou art a Spirit, and they that worship Thee must worship Thee in Spirit and in Truth. Blessed be Thy name! Thou didst send forth Thine Own Son to redeem and prepare us for the worship in the Spirit; and Thou didst send forth Thy Spirit to dwell in us and fit us for it. And now we have access to the Father, as through the Son, so in the Spirit.

Most Holy God! we confess with shame how much our worship has been in the power and the will of the flesh. By this we have dishonoured Thee, and grieved Thy Spirit, and brought infinite loss to our own souls. 0 God! forgive and save us from this sin. Teach us, we pray Thee, never, never to attempt to worship Thee but in Spirit and in Truth.

Our Father ! Thy Holy Spirit dwells in us. We beseech Thee, according to the riches of Thy glory, to strengthen us with might by Him, that our inner man may indeed be a spiritual temple, where spiritual sacrifices are unceasingly offered. And teach us the blessed art, as often as we enter Thy presence, of yielding self and the flesh to the death, and waiting for and trusting the Spirit who is in us, to work in us a worship, a faith and love, acceptable to Thee through Christ Jesus. And, oh! that throughout the universal Church, a worship in Spirit and in Truth may be sought after, and attained, and rendered to Thee day by day. We ask it in the name of Jesus. Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 4

The Spirit and the Word

'It is the Spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I have spoken unto you are Spirit and are life. Lord, to whom shall we go? I Thou hast the words of eternal life.'--John 6: 63, 68.

'The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.'-2 Cor. 3: 6.

Our Blessed Lord had been speaking of Himself as the Bread of Life, and of His flesh and blood as the meat and drink of eternal Life. To many of His disciples it was a hard saying, which they could not understand. Jesus tells them that it is only when the Holy Spirit is come, and they have Him, that His words will become clear to them. He says, 'It is the Spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I have spoken unto you, they are Spirit, and they are Life.'

'It is the Spirit that quickeneth,' in these words and the corresponding ones of Paul, ' the Spirit giveth life,' we have the nearest approach to what may be called a definition of the Spirit. (Comp. 1 Cor. 15: 45, 'a life-giving Spirit.') The Spirit always acts, in the first place, whether in nature or grace, as a Life-giving principle. It is of the deepest importance to keep firm hold on this. His work in the believer, of Sealing, Sanctifying, Enlightening, and Strengthening, is all rooted in this: it is as He is known and honoured, and place given to Him, as He is waited on as the Inner Life of the soul, that His other gracious workings can be experienced. These are but the outgrowth of the Life ; it is in the power of the Life within that they can be enjoyed. 'It is the Spirit that quickeneth.'

In contrast to the Spirit our Lord places the flesh. He says, 'the flesh profiteth nothing.' He is not speaking of the flesh as the fountain of sin, but in its religious aspect, as it is the power in which the natural man, or even the believer who does not fully yield to the Spirit, seeks to serve God, or to know and possess Divine things. The futile character of all its efforts our Lord indicates in the words, 'profiteth nothing;' they are not sufficient, they avail not to reach the Spiritual reality, the Divine things themselves. Paul means the same when he contrasts with the Spirit, the letter that killeth. The whole Dispensation of the Law was but a dispensation of the letter and the flesh. Though it had a certain glory, and Israel's privileges were very great, yet, as Paul says, 'Even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.'

Even Christ Himself, as long as He was in the flesh, and until, in the rending of the veil of His flesh, the dispensation of the Spirit took the place of that of the flesh, could not by His words effect in His disciples what He desired. 'It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing!

Our Lord applies this saying now specially to the words He had just spoken, and the Spiritual truth they contained. ' The words that I have spoken unto you are Spirit and are Life.' He wishes to teach the disciples two things. The one is, that the words are indeed a living seed, with a power of germinating and springing up, asserting their own vitality, revealing their meaning, and proving their Divine Power in those who receive them and keep them abiding in the heart. He wanted them not to be discouraged if they could not at once comprehend

them. His words are Spirit and Life; they are not meant for the understanding, but for the Life. Coming in the Power of the Unseen Spirit, higher and deeper than all thought, they enter into the very roots of the Life, they have themselves a Divine Life, working out effectually with a Divine energy the Truth they express into the experience of those who receive them. As a consequence of this their spiritual character--this is the other lesson He wished His disciples to learn--these words of His need a spiritual nature to receive them. Seed needs a congenial soil: there must be life in the soil as well as in the seed. Not into the mind only, nor into the feelings, nor ever, the will alone must the word be taken, but through them into the life. The centre of that life is man's spiritual nature, with conscience as its voice ; there the authority of the word must be acknowledged. But even this is not enough: conscience dwells in man as a captive amid powers it cannot control. It is the Spirit that comes from God, the Spirit that Christ came to bring, becoming our life, receiving the word and assimilating it to our life, that will make them to become the Truth and Power in us.

In our study of the work of the Blessed Spirit, we cannot be too careful to get clear and firm hold ,of this blessed truth. It will save us from right-hand and left-hand errors. It will keep us from expecting to enjoy the teaching of the Spirit without the Word, or to master the teaching of the Word without the Spirit.

On the one side, we have the right-hand error, seeking the teaching of the Spirit without the Word. In the Holy Trinity, the Word and the Spirit are ever in each other, one with the Father. It is not otherwise with the God-inspired Words of Scripture. The Holy Spirit has for all ages embodied the thoughts of God in the written word, and lives now for this very purpose in our hearts, there to reveal the power and the meaning of that Word. If you would be full of the Spirit, be full of the Word, If you would have the Divine Life of the Spirit within you grow strong, and acquire power in every part of your nature; let the Word of Christ dwell richly in you. If you would have the Spirit fulfil His office of Remembrancer, calling to mind at the right moment, and applying with Divine accuracy what Jesus has spoken to your need, have the Words of Christ abiding in you. If you would have the Spirit reveal to you the Will of God in each circumstance of life, choosing from apparently conflicting commands or Principles with unerring precision what you must do, and suggesting it as you need, oh ! have the Word living in you, ready for His use. If you would have the Eternal Word as your Light, let the Written Word be transcribed on your heart by the Holy Spirit. 'The Words that I have spoken unto you, they are Spirit and are Life.' Take them and treasure them: it is through them that the Spirit manifests His quickening power.'

On the other side, we have the left-hand and more common error. Think not for one moment that the Word can unfold its Life in thee, except as the Spirit within thee accepts and appropriates it in the inner life. How much of Scripture reading, and Scripture study, and Scripture preaching is there in which the first and main object is to reach the meaning of the Word? Men think that if they know correctly and exactly what it means, there will come as a natural consequence the blessing the Word is meant to bring. This is by no means the case. The Word is a seed. In every seed there is a fleshy part, in which the life is hidden. One may have the most precious and perfect seed in its bodily substance, and yet unless it be exposed in suitable soil to the influence of sun and moisture, the life may never grow up. And so we may hold the words and the doctrines of Scripture most intelligently and earnestly, and yet know little of their life or power. We need to remind ourselves and the Church unceasingly, that the Scriptures which were spoken by holy men of old as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, can only be understood by holy men as they are taught by the same Spirit. The words I have spoken are Spirit and Life;' for the apprehending and partaking of them ' the flesh profiteth nothing : it is the Spirit that quickeneth,' the Spirit of Life within us.

This is one of the awfully solemn lessons which the history of the Jews in the time of Christ teaches us. They were exceeding zealous, as they thought, for God's word and honour, and yet it turned out that all their zeal was for their human interpretation of God's word. Jesus said to them: 'Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think that

in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which testify of me: and ye will not come to me that ye may have life.' They did indeed trust to the Scriptures to lead them to eternal life; and yet they never saw that they testified of Christ, and so they would not come to Him. They studied and accepted Scripture in the light and in the power of their human understanding, and not in the light and power of God's Spirit as their life. The feebleness of the life of so many believers who read and know Scripture much has no other cause;they know not that it is the Spirit that quickeneth that the flesh, that the human understanding, however intelligent, however earnest, profiteth nothing. They think that in the Scriptures they have eternal life, but the living Christ, in the power of the Spirit, as their life, they know but little.

What is needed is very simple: the determined refusal to attempt to deal with the written word without the quickening Spirit. Let us never take Scripture into our hand, or mind, or mouth, without realizing the need and the promise of the Spirit. First, in a quiet act of worship, look to God to give and renew the workings of His Spirit within you; then, in a quiet act of faith, yield yourself to the power that dwells in you, and wait on Him, that not the mind alone, but the life in you, may be opened to receive the Word. Let the Holy Spirit be your life. To the Spirit and the Life coming out from within to meet the Word from without as its food, the words of Christ are indeed Spirit and Life.

As we further follow the teaching of our Blessed Lord as to the Spirit, it will become clear to us that, as the Lord's Words are Spirit and Life, so the Spirit must be in us as the Spirit of our Life, Our inmost personal life must be the Spirit of God.

Deeper down than mind, or feeling, or will, the very root of all these, and their animating principle, there must be the Spirit of God. As we seek to go lower down than these, as we see that nothing can reach the Spirit of Life which there is in the words of the Living God, and wait on the Holy Spirit within us, in the unseen depths of the hidden life, to receive and reveal the words in His quickening power, and work them into the very life of our life, we shall know in truth what it means: 'It is the Spirit that quickeneth.' We shall see how divinely right and becoming it is that the words which are Spirit and Life should be met in us by the Spirit and the Life dwelling within, how then alone they will unfold their meaning and impart their substance, and give their divine strength and fulness to the Spirit and the Life already within us.

0 my God! again I thank Thee for the wonderful gift of the indwelling Spirit. And I humbly beseech Thee anew that I may indeed know that He is in me, and how glorious the divine work He is carrying on.Teach me specially, I pray Thee, to believe that He is the life and the strength of the growth of the Divine life within me, the pledge and assurance that I can grow up into all my God would have me. As I see this, I shall understand how He, as the Spirit of the Life within me, will make my spirit hunger for the Word as the food of the life, will receive and assimilate it, will indeed make it Life and Power.

Forgive me, my God, that I have so much sought to apprehend Thy words, which are Spirit and Life, in the power of human thought and the fleshly mind. I have been so slow to learn that the flesh profiteth nothing. I do desire to learn it now.

0 my Father! give me the Spirit of wisdom, grant me the mighty workings of the Spirit, that I may know how deeply spiritual each word of Thine is, and how spiritual things can only be spiritually discerned. - Teach me in all my intercourse with Thy word to deny the flesh and the fleshly mind, to wait in deep humility and faith for the inward working of the Spirit to quicken the word. May thus all my meditation of Thy Word, all my keeping of it in faith and obedience, be in Spirit and in Truth, in Life and Power. Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 5

The Glorified Jesus

The Spirit of the glorified Jesus He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him were to receive for the Spirit was not yet; because Jesus was not yet glorified,' --John 7: 37, 38

Our Lord promises here, that those who come unto Him and drink, who believe in Him, will not only never thirst, but will themselves become fountains, whence streams of living water, of life and blessing, will flow forth. In recording the words, John explains that the promise was a prospective one, that would have to wait for its fulfilment till the Spirit should have been poured out. He also gave the double reason for this delay: The Holy Spirit was not yet; because Jesus was not yet glorified. The expression : the Spirit was not yet, has appeared strange, and so the word given has been inserted. But the expression, if accepted as it stands, may guide us into the true understanding of the real significance of the Spirit's not coming until Jesus was glorified.

We have seen that God has given a twofold revelation of Himself, first as, God in the Old Testament, then as Father in the New. We know how the Son, who had from eternity been with the Father, entered upon a new stage of existence when He became flesh. When He returned to Heaven, He was still the same only-begotten Son of God, and yet not altogether the same. For He was now also, as Son of Man, the first-begotten from the dead, clothed with that glorified humanity which He had perfected and sanctified for Himself. And just so the Spirit of God as poured out on Pentecost was indeed something new. Through the Old Testament He was always called the Spirit of God or the Spirit of the Lord; the name of Holy Spirit He did not yet bear as His own proper name.' It is only in connection with the work He has to do in preparing the way for Christ, and a body for Him, that the proper name comes into use (Luke 1: 15, 35). When poured out at Pentecost, He came as the Spirit of the glorified Jesus, the Spirit of the Incarnate, crucified, and exalted Christ, the bearer and communicator to us, not of the life of God as such, but of that life as it had been interwoven into human nature in the person of Christ Jesus. It is in this capacity specially that He bears the name of Holy Spirit, it is as the Indwelling One that God is Holy. And of this Spirit, as He dwelt in Jesus in the flesh, and can dwell in us in the flesh too, it is distinctly and literally true ; the Holy Spirit was not yet. The Spirit of the glorified Jesus, the Son of man become the Son of God He could not be ,until Jesus was glorified.

This thought opens up to us further the reason why it is not the Spirit of God as such, but the Spirit of Jesus, that could be sent to dwell in us. Sin had not only disturbed our relation to God's law, but to God Himself ; with the Divine favour we had lost the Divine life. Christ came not only to deliver man from the law and its curse, but to bring human nature itself again into the fellowship of the Divine life, to make us partakers of the Divine nature. He could do this, not by an exercise of Divine Power on man, but only in the path of a free, moral, and most real human development. In His own person, having become flesh, He had to sanctify the flesh, and make it a meet and willing receptacle for the indwelling of the Spirit of God. Having done this, He had, in accordance with the law that the lower form of life rise to a higher, only through decay and death ,in death both to bear the curse of sin and to give Himself as the seedcorn to bring forth fruit in us. From His nature, as it was glorified in the

resurrection and ascension, His Spirit came forth as the Spirit of His human life, glorified into the union with the Divine, to make us partakers of all that He had personally wrought out and acquired, of Himself and His glorified life. In virtue of His atonement, man now had a right and title to the fulness of the Divine Spirit, and to His indwelling, as never before. And in virtue of His having perfected in Himself a new holy human nature on our behalf, He could now communicate what previously had no existence,-a life at once human and Divine. From henceforth the Spirit, just as He was the personal Divine life, could also become the personal life of men. Even as the Spirit is the personal life principle in God Himself, so He can be it in the child of God: the Spirit of God's Son can now be the Spirit that cries in our heart, Abba, Father. Of this Spirit it is most fully true, 'The Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

But now, Blessed be God ! Jesus has been glorified ; there is now the Spirit of the glorified Jesus; the promise can now be fulfilled: He that believeth on me, out of him shall flow rivers of living waters. The great transaction which took place when Jesus was glorified is now an eternal reality. When Christ had entered with our human nature, in our flesh, into the Holiest of all, there took place that of which Peter speaks, 'Being by the right hand of God exalted, He received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost.'In our place, and on our behalf, as man and the Head of man, He was admitted into the full glory of the Divine, and His human nature constituted the receptacle and the dispenser of the Divine Spirit. And the Holy Spirit could come down as the Spirit of the God-man --most really the Spirit of God, and yet as truly the spirit of man.He could come down as the Spirit of the glorified Jesus to be in each one who believes in Jesus, the Spirit of His personal life and His personal presence, and at the same time the spirit of the personal life of the believer. Just as in Jesus the perfect union of God and man had been effected and finally completed when He sat down upon the throne, and He so entered on a new, stage of existence, a glory hitherto unknown, so too, now, a new era has commenced in the life and the work of the Spirit.He can now come down to witness of the perfect union of the Divine and the human, and in becoming our life, to make us partakers of it. There is now the Spirit of the glorified Jesus: He hath poured Him forth; we have received Him to stream into us, to stream through us, and to stream forth from us in rivers of blessing.

The glorifying of Jesus and the streaming forth of His Spirit are intimately connected; in vital organic union the two are inseparably linked.. If we would have, not only the Spirit of God, but this Spirit of Christ, which 'was not yet,'but now is, the Spirit of the glorified Jesus, it is specially with the glorified Jesus we must believingly deal. We must not simply rest content with the faith that trusts in the cross and its pardon; we must seek to know the New Life, the Life of Glory and Power Divine in human nature, of which the Spirit of the glorified Jesus is meant to be the Witness and the Bearer. This is the mystery which was hid from ages and generations, but is now made known by the Holy Spirit, Christ in us; how He really can live His Divine life in us who are in the flesh. We have the most intense personal interest in knowing and understanding what it means that Jesus is glorified, that human nature shares the life and glory of God, that the Spirit was not yet, as long as Jesus was not glorified. And that not only because we are one day to see Him in His glory, and to be with Him in it. No, but even now, day by day, we are to live in it. The Holy Spirit is able to be to us just as much as we are willing to have of Him, and of the life of the glorified Lord.

'This spake Jesus of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet; because Jesus was not yet glorified.' God be praised! Jesus has been glorified: there is now the Spirit of the glorified Jesus; we have received Him. In the Old Testament only the unity of God was revealed; when the Spirit was mentioned, it was always as His Spirit, the power by which God was working: in the New was not known on earth as a Person. In the New Testament the Trinity is revealed; with Pentecost - the Holy Spirit descended as a Person to dwell in us. This is the fruit of Jesus' work, that we now have the Personal Presence of the Holy Spirit on earth. Just as in Christ Jesus, the second Person, the Son, came to reveal the Father, and the Father dwelt and spoke in Him, even so the Spirit, the third Person, comes to reveal the Son, and in Him the Son dwells and works

in us. This is the glory wherewith the Father glorified the Son of man, because the Son had glorified Him, that in His Name and through Him, the Holy Spirit descends as a Person to dwell in believers, and to make the glorified Jesus a Present Reality within them. This is it of which Jesus says, that whoso believeth in Him shall never thirst, but shall have rivers of waters flowing out of him. This alone it is that satisfies the soul's thirst, and makes it a fountain to quicken others; the Personal Indwelling of the Holy Spirit, revealing the Presence of the glorified Jesus.

' He that believeth on me, rivers of water shall flow out of him. This spake He of the Spirit.' Here we have once again the, blessed Key of all God's treasures : He that believeth on me .It is the glorified Jesus who baptizes with the Holy Ghost: let us believe in Him. Let each one who longs for the full blessing here promised only believe. Let us believe in Him, that He is indeed glorified, that all He is and does and wishes to do is in the power of a Divine glory.

According to the riches of His glory, God can now work in us. Let us believe that he has given His Holy Spirit, that we have the personal presence of the Spirit on earth and within us. By this faith the glory of Jesus in heaven and the Power of the Spirit in our hearts become inseparably linked. Let us believe that in the fellowship with Jesus the stream will flow ever stronger and fuller, into us and out of us. Yes; let us believe on Jesus. But let us remember : thinking on these things, understanding them, being very sure of them, rejoicing in a fuller insight into them, all this, though needful, is not itself believing.

Faith is surrender: believing is that power of the renewed nature which, forsaking self and dying to it, makes room for the Divine, for God, for the glorified Christ to come and take possession and do His work. Faith in Jesus bows in lowly stillness and poverty of spirit, to realize that self has nothing, and that Another, the unseen Spirit, has now come in to be its leader, its strength, and its life. Faith in Jesus bows in the stillness of a quiet surrender before Him, fully assured that as it waits on Him, He will cause the river to flow.

Blessed Lord Jesus! I do believe, help Thou mine unbelief. Do Thou, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, perfect the work of faith in me too. Teach me, I pray Thee, with a faith that enters the unseen, to realize what Thy glory is, and what my share in it is even now, according to Thy word: The glory which Thou gavest me, I have given them.' Teach me that the Holy Ghost and His power is the glory which Thou givest us, and that Thou wouldst have us show forth Thy glory in rejoicing in His holy presence on earth and His indwelling in us. Teach me above all, my blessed Lord to take and hold these blessed truths in the mind, but with my spirit that is in my inmost parts, to wait on Thee to be filled with Thy Spirit.

0 my glorified Lord I do even now bow before Thy glory in humble faith. Let all the life of self and the flesh be abased and perish, as I worship and wait before Thee. Let the Spirit of Glory become my life. Let His Presence break down all trust in self, and make room for Thee. And let my whole life be one of faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me. Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 6

The Indwelling Spirit

I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may be with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: ye know Him, for He abideth with you, and shall be in you ' John 14:16, 17.

'He shall be in you.' In these simple words our Lord announces that wonderful mystery of the Spirit's indwelling which was to be the fruit and the crown of His redeeming work. It was for this man had been created. It was for this, God's mastery within the heart, the Spirit had striven in vain with men through the past ages. It was for this Jesus had lived and was about to die. Without this the Father's purpose and His own work would fail of their accomplishment. For want of this the intercourse of the Blessed Master with the disciples had effected so little. He had hardly ever ventured to mention it to them, because He knew they would not understand it. But now, on the last night, when it was but a little time, He discloses the Divine Secret that, when He left them, their loss would be compensated by a greater blessing than His bodily presence. Another would come in His stead, to abide with them for ever, and to dwell in them. Dwelling in them, He would prepare them to receive Himself their Lord, and the Father, within them too. 'He shall be in you.'

Our Father has given us a twofold revelation of Himself. In His Son He reveals His Holy Image, and setting him before men invites them to become like Him by receiving Him into their heart and life. In His Spirit He sends forth His Divine Power, to enter into us, and from within prepare us for receiving the Son and the Father. The dispensation of the Spirit is the dispensation of the inner life. In the dispensation of the Word, or the Son, beginning as it did with the creation of man in God's image, continued as it was through all the preparatory stages down to Christ's appearing, in the flesh, all was more external and preparatory. There were at times special and mighty workings of the Spirit; but the indwelling was unknown; man had not yet become an habitation of God in the Spirit. Now first, this was to be attained. The eternal life was to become the very life of man, hiding itself within his very being and consciousness, and clothing itself in the forms of a human will and life. Just as it is through the Spirit that God is what He is; just as in the Father and the Son, the Spirit is the principle in which their personality has its root and consciousness, so this Spirit of the Divine life is now to be in us, in the deepest sense of the word, the principle of our life, the root of our personality too, the very life of our being and consciousness. He is to be one with us in the absoluteness of a Divine immanence, dwelling in us, even as the Father in the Son, and the Son in the Father. Let us bow in holy reverence to worship and adore, and to receive the mighty blessing.

If we would enter into the full understanding and experience of what our Blessed Lord here promises, we must above everything remember that what He speaks of is a Divine indwelling. Wherever God dwells He hides Himself. In nature He hides Himself; most men see Him not there. In meeting His saints of old He mostly hid Himself under some manifestation in human weakness, so that it was often only after He was gone that they said, Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. 'The Blessed Son came to reveal God, and yet He came as a root out of a dry ground, without form or comeliness; even His own disciples were at times offended at Him. Men always expect the kingdom of God to come with observation ; they know not that it is a hidden mystery, to be

received only as, in His own self-revealing power, God makes Himself known in hearts surrendered and prepared for Him. Christians are always ready, when the promise of the Spirit occupies them, to form some conception as to how His leading can be known in their thoughts; how His quickening will affect their feelings; how His sanctifying can be recognised in their will and conduct. They need to be reminded that deeper than mind and feeling and will, deeper than the soul, where these have their seat, in the depths of the spirit that came from God, there comes the Holy Spirit to dwell.

This. indwelling is therefore first of all, and all through, to be recognised by faith. Even when I cannot see the least evidence of His working, I am quietly and reverently to believe that He dwells in me. In that faith I am restfully and trustfully to count upon His working ,and to wait for it. In that faith I must very distinctly deny my own wisdom and strength, and in childlike self-abnegation depend upon Him to work. His first workings may be so feeble and hidden that I can hardly recognise them as coming from Him; they may appear to be nothing more than the voice of conscience, or the familiar sound of some Bible truth. Here is the time for faith to hold fast the Master's promise and the Father's gift, and to trust that the Spirit is within and will guide. In that faith let me continually yield up my whole being to His rule and mastery; let me be faithful to what appears the nearest to His voice; in such faith and such faithfulness my soul will be prepared for knowing His voice better. Out of the hidden depths His power will move to take possession of mind and will, and the indwelling in the hidden recesses of the heart will grow into a being filled with His fulness.

Faith is the one faculty of our spiritual nature by which we can recognise the Divine, in whatever low and unlikely appearances it clothes itself. And if this be true of the Father in His glory as God, and the Son as the manifestation of the Father, how much more must it be true of the Spirit, the unseen Divine life-power come to clothe itself, and hide itself away, within our weakness ? Oh! let us cultivate and exercise much our faith in the Father, whose one gift through the Son is this, the Spirit in our hearts. And in the Son too, whose whole Person and Work and Glory centre in the gift of the Indwelling Spirit. And so let out faith grow strong in the unseen, sometimes unfelt Divine Presence of this Mighty Power, this living Person, who has descended into our weakness, and hidden Himself in our littleness, to fit us for becoming the dwelling of the Father and the Son. Let our adoring worship of our glorified Lord ever seek to catch the wondrous answer He gives to every prayer, as the seal of our acceptance, as the promise of deeper knowledge of our God, of closer fellowship and richer blessedness: The Holy Spirit dwelleth in you.

The deep importance of a right apprehension of the indwelling of the Spirit is evident from the place it occupies in our Lord's farewell discourse. In this and the two following chapters, He speaks of the Spirit more directly as Teacher, I as Witness, as representing and glorifying Himself, as convincing the world. At the same time, He connects this, and He says of His and the Father's indwelling, of the union of the Vine and the branches, of the Peace and Joy and Power in Prayer which His disciples would have, with 'that day,' the time of the Spirit's coming. But, before all this, as its one condition and only source, He places the promise, 'the Spirit shall be in, you.' It avails little that we know all that the Spirit can do for us, or that we confess our entire dependence on Him, unless we clearly realize, and place first, what the Master gave the first place ; that it is as the indwelling Spirit alone that He can be our Teacher or our Strength. As the Church, as the believer, accepts our Lord's, ' He shall be in you,' and lives under the control of this faith, our true relation to the Blessed Spirit will be restored. He will take charge and inspire; He will mightily fill and bless the being given up to Him as His abode.

A careful study of the epistles will confirm this, In writing to the Corinthians, Paul had to reprove them for sad and terrible sins, and yet he says to all, including the feeblest and most unfaithful believer, 'Know ye not that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?' Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost ?' He is sure that if this were believed, if to this truth were given the place God meant it to have, it would not only be the motive, but

the power of a new and holy life. To the backsliding Galatians, he has no mightier plea to address than this : they had received the Spirit by the preaching of faith; God had sent forth the Spirit of His Son into their hearts ; they had their life by the Spirit in them ; if they could but understand and believe this, they would also walk in the Spirit.

It is this teaching the Church of Christ needs in our days. I am deeply persuaded that very few of us realize aright to what extent believers are ignorant of this aspect of the truth concerning the Holy Spirit, or to what an extent this is the cause of their feebleness in holy walk and work. There may be a great deal of praying for the Holy Spirit's working, there may be great correctness in our confession, both in preaching and prayer, of entire and absolute dependence on Him; but unless His personal, continual, Divine indwelling be acknowledged and experienced, we must not be surprised if there be continual failure. The Holy Dove wants his resting place free from all intrusion and disturbance. God wants entire possession of His temple. Jesus wants His home all to Himself. He cannot do His work there, He cannot rule and reveal Himself and His love as He would, unless the whole home, the whole inner being, be possessed and filled by the Holy Spirit. Let us consent to this. As the meaning of the indwelling dawns upon us in its full extent and claims, as we accept it as a Divine reality to be carried out and maintained by nothing less than an Almighty Power, as we bow low in emptiness and surrender, in faith and adoration, to accept the promise and live on it, ' He shall be in you,' the Father will, for Jesus' sake, delight to fulfil it in our experience, and we shall know that the beginning, and the secret, and the power of the life of a true disciple is, the Indwelling Spirit.

Blessed Lord Jesus! my soul doth bless Thee for Thy precious word : The Spirit shall be in you. In deep humility I now once again accept it, and ask Thee to teach me its full and blessed meaning.

I ask for myself and all God's children that we may see how near Thy love would come to us, how entirely and most intimately Thou wouldst give Thyself to us. Nothing can satisfy Thee but to have Thy abode within us, to dwell in us as the life of our life. To this end Thou hast sent forth, from Thy glory, Thy Holy Spirit into our hearts, to be the power that lives and acts in our inmost being, and to give in us the revelation of Thyself. 0 holy Saviour! bring Thy Church to see this truth that has been so much hid and lost, to experience it, and to bear witness to it in power. May the joyful sound be heard throughout her borders, that every true believer has the indwelling and the leading of Thy Spirit. And teach me, my Lord! the life of faith, that goes out of self, to wait on Thee, as in Thy Spirit Thou dost Thy work within me. May my life from hour to hour be in the holy, humble consciousness : Christ's Spirit dwelleth in me. In humility and silence I bow before this holy mystery, my God ! my Lord Jesus ! Thine own Spirit dwells in me. Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 7

The Spirit given to the Obedient

If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments: and I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth.' --John 14:15,16

'The Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey Him.'Acts 5:32.

The truth which these words express has often suggested the question - How can this be? We need the Spirit to make us obedient; we long for the Spirit's power, just because we mourn so much the disobedience there still is, and desire to be otherwise. And how is this? The Saviour claims obedience as the condition of the Father's giving and our receiving the Spirit.

The difficulty will be removed if we remember what we have more than once seen, that there is a twofold manifestation of the Spirit of God, corresponding to the Old and New Testament. In the former, He works as the Spirit of God, preparing the way for the higher revelation of God, as the Father of Jesus Christ. In this way He had worked in Christ's disciples, as the Spirit of conversion and faith. What they were now about to receive was something higher--the Spirit of the glorified Jesus, communicating the power from on high, the experience of His full salvation. And though now, to all believers under the New Testament economy, the Spirit in them is the Spirit of Christ, there is still something that corresponds to the twofold dispensation. Where there is not much knowledge of the Spirit's work, or where His workings in a Church or an individual are but feeble, there even believers will not get beyond the experience of His preparatory workings; though He be in them, they know Him not in His power as the Spirit of the glorified Lord. They have Him in them to make them obedient; it is only as they yield obedience to this His more elementary work, the keeping of Christ's commandments, that they will be promoted to the higher experience of His conscious indwelling, as the Representative and Revealer of Jesus in His glory. 'If ye love me, keep my commandments: and I will pray the Father, and He will send you another Comforter.'

The lesson is one we cannot study too attentively. In Paradise, in the angels of heaven, in God's own Son, by obedience and obedience alone, could the relationship with the Divine Being be maintained, and admission secured to closer experience of His Love and His Life. God's will revealed is the expression of His hidden perfection and being; only in accepting and doing the will, in the entire giving up for the will to possess and use as He pleases, are we fitted for entering the Divine Presence. Was it not thus even with the Son of God? It was when, after a life in holy humility and obedience for thirty years, He had spoken that word of entire consecration, 'It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness,' and given Himself to a baptism for the sins of His people, that He was baptized with the Spirit. The Spirit came because of His obedience. And again, it was after He had learned obedience in suffering, and became obedient to the death of the cross, that He again received the Spirit from the Father (Acts 2: 3 3) to pour out on His disciples. The fulness of the Spirit for His body the Church was the reward of obedience. And this law of the Spirit's coming, as revealed in the Head, holds for every member of the body : obedience is the indispensable condition of the Spirit's indwelling. 'If ye love me, keep my commandments: and

the Father will send you the Spirit.'

Christ Jesus had come to prepare the way for the Spirit's coming. Or rather, His outward coming in the flesh was the preparation for His inward coming in the Spirit to fulfil the promise of a Divine indwelling. The outward coming appealed to the soul, with its mind and feeling, and affected these. It was only as Christ in His outward coming was accepted, as He was loved and obeyed, that the Inward and more Intimate revelation would be given. Personal attachment to Jesus, the personal acceptance of Him as Lord and Master to love and obey, was the disciples' preparation for the baptism of the Spirit. And so now , it is as in a tender listening to the voice of conscience, and a faithful effort to keep the commands of Jesus, we prove our love to Him, that the heart will be prepared for the fulness of the Spirit. Our attainments may fall short of our aims, we may have to mourn that what we would we do not--if the Master sees the whole-hearted surrender to His will, and the faithful obedience to what we already have of the leadings of His Spirit, we may be sure that the full gift will not be withheld.

Do not these words suggest to us the two great reasons why the presence and the power of the Spirit in the Church is so feebly realized ? We do not understand that as the obedience of love must precede the fulness of the Spirit, so the fulness of the Spirit must still follow on it. They err who want the fulness of the Spirit before they obey, no less than those who think that obedience is already a sign that the fulness of the Spirit is there. '

Obedience must precede the baptism of the Spirit. John had preached Jesus as the true Baptist--baptizing with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Jesus took His disciples as candidates for this Baptism into a three years' course of training. First of all, attached them to Himself personally. He taught them to forsake all for Him. He called Himself their Master and Lord, and taught them to do what He said. And then in His farewell discourse He time after time spoke of obedience to His commands as the one condition of all further spiritual blessing. It is to be feared that the Church has not given this word Obedience the prominence Christ gave it. Wrong views of the danger of Self-righteousness, of the way in which free Grace is to be exalted, of the power of sin and a needs be of sinning, with the natural reluctance of the flesh to accept a high standard of holiness, have been the causes. While the freedom of grace and the simplicity of faith have been preached, the absolute necessity of obedience and holiness has not been equally insisted on. It has been thought that only those who had the fulness of the Spirit could be obedient. It was not seen that obedience was the lower platform,-that the baptism of the Spirit, the full revelation of the glorified Lord as the Indwelling One in His power to work in us and through us His mighty works, was something higher, the Presence that the obedient should inherit. It was not seen that simple and full allegiance to every dictate of conscience, and every precept of the word, that a ' walk worthy of the Lord to all well-pleasing,' was to be the passport to that full life in the Spirit in which He would witness to the abiding Presence of the Lord in the heart.

As the natural consequence of the neglect of this truth, the companion truth was also forgotten: The obedient must and may look for the fulness of the Spirit. The promise of the special, conscious, active indwelling. of the Spirit to the obedient is a thing to many Christians unknown. The great part of life is spent in mourning over disobedience, over the want of the Spirit's power, and praying for the Spirit to help them to obey, instead of rising in the strength of the Spirit already in them to obedience, as indeed possible and necessary. The thought of the Holy Spirit being specially sent to the obedient to give in them the Presence of Jesus as a continuous reality, that He might do in them the greater works, even as the Father had worked in Him, was hardly thought of. The meaning of the life of Jesus as our example is not understood. How distinctly there was with Him the outward lowly life of trial and obedience in preparation for the hidden spiritual one of Power and Glory! It is this inner life that we are made partakers of in the gift of the Spirit of the glorified Jesus. But in our inner personal participation of that gift we must walk in the way He dedicated for us; as in the crucifixion of the flesh we yield ourselves to God's will, for Him to do in us what He wills, and for us also to do what He wills, we shall experience that God is to be found

nowhere but in His will. His will in Christ, accepted and done by us, with the heart in which it is done, is the home of the Holy Spirit. The revelation of the Son in His perfect obedience was the condition of the giving of the Spirit; the acceptance of the Son in love and obedience is the path to the indwelling of the Spirit.

It is this truth which has in these latter years come home with power to the hearts of many in the use of the words full surrender and entire consecration As they understood that the Lord Jesus did indeed claim implicit obedience, that the giving up all to Him and His will was absolutely necessary, and in the power of His grace truly possible, and in the faith of His power did it, they found the entrance to a life of peace and strength formerly unknown. Many are learning, or have to learn, that they do not yet fully know the lesson. They will find that there are applications of this principle beyond what we have conceived. As we see how in the all-pervading power of the Spirit, as we already possess Him, every movement of our life must be brought into allegiance to Jesus, and give ourselves to it in faith, we shall also see that the Spirit of the glorifiied Lord can make Him present and work His mighty works in us and through us, in a way far beyond what we can ask or think. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit was intended by God and Christ to be to the Church more, oh! so much more, than we have yet known., Oh ! shall we not yield ourselves, in a love and obedience that will sacrifice anything for Jesus, that our hearts may be enlarged for the fulness of His blessing prepared for us.

Let us cry to God very earnestly, that He may waken His Church and people to take in this double lesson: A living obedience is indispensable to the full experience of the indwelling; the full experience of the indwelling is what a loving obedience may certainly claim. Let each of us even now say to our Lord that we do love Him, and keep His commandments. In however much feebleness and failure it be, still let us speak it out to Him as the one purpose of our souls; this He will accept. Let us believe in the indwelling of the Spirit as already given to us, when in the obedience of faith we gave ourselves to Him. Let us believe that the full indwelling, with the revelation of Christ within, can be ours. And let us be content with nothing less than the loving, reverent, trembling, but blessed consciousness that we are the Temples of the Living God, because the Spirit of God dwelleth in us.

Blessed Lord Jesus ! with my whole heart do I accept the teaching of these words of Thine. And most earnestly do I beseech Thee to write the truth ever deeper in my heart, as one of the laws of Thy Kingdom, that Loving Obedience may look for a Loving Acceptance, sealed by ever-increasing experience of the Power of the Spirit.

I thank Thee for what Thy word teaches of what the Love and Obedience of Thy disciples were. Though still imperfect--for did they not all forsake Thee?--yet Thou didst cover it with the cloak of Thy love: 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh weak;' and accept it, feeble though it was. Saviour! with my whole heart I say I do love Thee, and would keep each one of Thy commandments.

Afresh I surrender myself to Thee for this. In the depths of my soul Thou seest there is but one desire, that Thy will should be done in me as in Heaven.

To every reproof of conscience I would bow very low.To every moving of Thy Spirit I would yield in implicit obedience. Into Thy death I give my will and life, that, being raised with Thee, the Life of Another even of Thy Holy Spirit, who dwelleth in me, and revealeth Thee, may be my life. Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 8

Knowing The Spirit.

The Spirit of Truth whom the world cannot receive, for it beholdeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: Ye know Him; for He abideth with you, and shall be in you.'-John 14: 17.

'Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?' -1 Cor. 3:16.

THE value of knowledge, that is, true spiritual knowledge, in the life of faith can hardly be exaggerated. Just as a man on earth is none the richer for an inheritance that comes to him, or a treasure in his field, as long as he does not know of it, or does not know how to get possessed of it, and to use it,-so the gifts of God's Grace cannot bring their full blessing until we know and, in knowing, truly apprehend and possess them. In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; it is the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, his Lord, for which the believer is willing to count all things but loss. It is owing to the want of a true knowledge of what God in Christ has prepared for us that the lives of believers are so low and feeble. The prayer Paul offered for the Ephesians--that the Father would give them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of their heart being enlightened, that they might know the hope of their calling, and the riches of the inheritance, and the exceeding goodness of the power working in them-- is one we never can pray enough, whether for ourselves or for others. But of what special importance it is that we should know the Teacher through whom all the other knowledge is to come! The Father has given each one of His children not only Christ, who is the truth, the reality of all life and grace, but the Holy Spirit, who is the very Spirit of Christ and the Truth. ' We received the Spirit, which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given us by God.'

But now comes the important question, How do we know when it is the Spirit that is teaching us? If our knowledge of Divine things is to be to us a certainty and a comfort, we must know the Teacher Himself. It is only knowing Him that will be to us the full evidence that what we count our spiritual knowledge is no deception. Our blessed Lord meets this question, with all the solemn issues depending upon it, by assuring us that we shall know the Spirit. When a messenger comes to tell of a king, when a witness gives a testimony for his friend, neither speaks of himself. And yet, without doing so, both the messenger and the witness, in the very fact of giving their evidence, draw our attention to themselves, and claim our recognition of their presence and trustworthiness. And just so the Holy Spirit, when He testifies of Christ and glorifies Him, must be known and acknowledged in His Divine commission and presence. It is only thus that we can have the assurance that the knowledge we receive is indeed of God, and not what our human reason has gathered from the Word of God. To know the King's seal is the only safeguard against a counterfeit image. To know the Spirit is the Divine foundation of certainty.

And how now can the Spirit thus be known ? Jesus says: 'Ye know Him, for He abideth with you, and shall be in you.' The abiding indwelling of the Spirit is the condition of knowing Him. His presence will be self-evidencing. As we allow Him to dwell in us, as we give Him full possession in faith and obedience, and allow Him to testify of Jesus as Lord, He will bring His credentials: He will prove Himself to be the Spirit of God. 'It is the Spirit beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.' It is because the presence of the Spirit as the indwelling teacher of

every believer is so little known and recognised in the Church, and because, as the result of this, the workings of the Spirit are few and feeble, that there is so much difficulty and doubt, so much fear and hesitation about the recognition of the witness of the Spirit. As the truth and experience of the indwelling of the Spirit is restored among God's people, and the Spirit is free again to work in power among us, His blessed presence will be its own sufficient proof : we shall indeed know Him. Ye know Him, for He shall be in you."

But meanwhile, as long as His presence is so little recognised, and His working straitened, how is He now to be known ? To this question the answer is very simple. To every one who honestly desires, not only to know that he has the Spirit, but to know Him in His person, and as a personal possession and Teacher, we say: Study the teaching of the Word in regard to the Spirit. Be not content with the teaching of the Church or of men about the Spirit, but go to the Word. Be not content with your ordinary 'reading of the Word, or what you already know of its doctrines. If you are in earnest to know the Spirit, go and search the Word specially with this view, as one thirsting to drink deeply of the water of life. Gather together all the Word says of the Spirit, His indwelling and His work, and hide it in your heart. Be determined to accept of nothing but what the Word teaches, but also to accept heartily of all it teaches.

But study the Word in dependence on the Spirit's teaching. If you study it with your human wisdom, your study of it may only confirm you in your mistaken views. If you are a child of God, you have the Holy Spirit to teach you, even though you do not yet know how He works in you. Ask the Father to work through Him in you, and to make the Word life and light in you. If, in the spirit of humility, and trusting in God's guidance, you submit heartily to the Word, You will find the promise surely fulfilled: you will be taught of God. We have more than once spoken of the progress from the outward to the inward: be whole-hearted in giving up all your thoughts and men's thoughts as you accept the Word; ask God to reveal in you by His Spirit His thoughts concerning His Spirit: He will assuredly do so.

And what will be the chief marks to be found in the Word by which the Spirit in us can be known? They will be chiefly two. The first will be more external, referring to the work He does. The second more in the inner life, in the dispositions which He seeks in those in whom He dwells.

We have just heard how Jesus spoke of a loving obedience as the condition of the Spirit's coming. Obedience is the abiding mark of His presence. Jesus gave Him as a Teacher and Guide. All Scripture speaks of His work as demanding the surrender of the whole life. 'If by the Spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live; for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.' ' Your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost: glorify God therefore in your body.' ' If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.' 'We are changed into the same image, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' Words like these define very distinctly the operations of the Spirit. As God is first known in His works, so with the Spirit. He reveals God's will, Christ doing that will, - and calling us to follow Him in it. As the believer surrenders himself to a life-in the Spirit, cordially consents that the leading of the Spirit, the mortifying of the flesh, the obedience to the rule of Christ, without limit or exception, shall be what he gives himself up to, and as he waits on the Spirit to work all this, he will find and know the Spirit working in him. It is as we simply make the aim of the Holy Spirit our aim, and give up ourselves entirely to what He is to come and work, that we are prepared to know Him as dwelling in us. As we are led by Him to obey God even as Christ did, it will be the Spirit Himself, bearing witness with our spirit, that He dwells in us.

We shall also know Him, and that still more certainly and intimately, as we not only yield ourselves to that life He works, but as we study the personal relation in which a believer stands to Him, and the way in which His working may most fully be experienced. The habit of soul the Spirit desires is contained in the one word-faith. Faith has ever to do with the Invisible, with what appears to man most unlikely. When the Divine appeared in Jesus, in

what a lowly form was it hidden ! Thirty years, He lived in Nazareth, and they had seen nothing in Him but the son of a carpenter. It was only with His baptism that His Divine Sonship came into complete and perfect consciousness. Even to His disciples His Divine glory was often hidden. How much more when the Life of God enters the depths of our sinful being, will it be matter of faith to recognize it! Let us meet the Spirit in holy, humble faith. Let us not be content just to know that the Spirit is in us: that will profit us but little. Let us cultivate the habit, in each -religious exercise, of bowing reverently in silence before God, to give the Spirit, the recognition that is His due, and keep down the will of the flesh that is so ready with its service of God. Let us wait on the Spirit in deep dependence. Let us have a season of quiet meditation, in which we enter the inner temple of our heart, to see that all there is indeed surrendered to the Spirit, and then bow before the Father to ask and expect from Him the mighty working of the Holy Spirit. However little we see or feel, let us believe. The Divine is always first known by believing. As we continue believing, we shall be prepared to know and to see.

There is no way of knowing a fruit but by tasting it There is no way of knowing the light but by being in it and using it. There is no way of knowing a person but by intercourse with him. There is no way of knowing the Holy Spirit but by possessing Him, and being possessed of Him. To live in the Spirit is the only way to know the Spirit. To have Him in us, doing His work, giving us His fellowship, and guiding our whole life, this is the path the Master opens when He says: ' Ye know Him, for He shall be in you.'

Believer! for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus Paul counted all things but loss. Shall we not do so too ? Shall we not, to know the glorified Christ through the Spirit, give up everything? Oh, let us think of it! the Father hath sent the Spirit that we might fully share in the glory of the glorified Christ! Shall we not give ourselves up to have Him in us, to let Him have all in us, that we may fully know Him, through whom alone we can know the Son and the Father ? Let us even now yield ourselves to the full to the indwelling and teaching of the Blessed Spirit whom the Son hath given us from the Father.

Blessed Father! who hast, in the name of Christ, sent us Thy Holy Spirit, graciously hear my prayer, and grant that I may know Him indeed by having Him within me. May His witness to Jesus be divinely clear and mighty, may His leading and sanctifying be in such holy power, may His indwelling in my spirit be in such Truth and Life, that the consciousness of Him as my Life may be as simple and sure as of my natural life, As the light is the sufficient witness to the sun, may His light be its own witness to the, presence of Jesus.

And lead me, 0 my Father, in knowing Him to know aright the mystery of Thy Love in giving Him within. May I understand how it was not enough to Thee to work in me by Thy secret, unknown, Almighty Power, nor even to work through Him who came to the earth to reveal Thee. Thy Son had something more, and better still, for us the Spirit, the Blessed Third in the Godhead, was sent, that Thy Personal Presence, the most intimate union and unbroken fellowship with Thee, might be my portion. The Holy Spirit, Thy very Life and Self, has come to be now the life of my very self, and so take me wholly for Thine own.

0 my God, do teach me and all Thy people to know Thy Spirit. Not only to know that He is in us, not only to know somewhat of His working, but to know Him as in His very person He reveals and glorifies the Son, and in Him Thee the Father, Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 9

The Spirit of Truth

'But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of me.'--John 15:26.

'When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the Truth; for He shall not speak from Himself; but whatsoever things He shall hear, these shall He speak.'--John 16:13.

God created man in His image; to become like Himself, capable of holding fellowship with Him in His glory. In Paradise two ways were set before man for attaining to this likeness to God. These were typified by the two trees-that of life, and that of knowledge. God's way was the former, ---through life would come the knowledge and likeness of God; in abiding in God's will, and partaking of God's life, man would be perfected. In recommending the other, Satan assured man that knowledge was the one thing to be desired to make us like God. And when man chose the light of knowledge above the life in obedience, he entered upon the terrible path that leads to death.' The desire to know became his greatest temptation; his whole nature was corrupted, and knowledge was to him more than obedience and more than life.

Under the power of this deceit, that promises happiness in knowledge, the human race is still led astray. And nowhere does it show its power more terribly than in connection with the true religion and God's own revelation of Himself. Even where the word of God is accepted, the wisdom of the world and of the flesh ever enters in; even spiritual Truth is robbed of its power when held, not in the life of the Spirit, but in the wisdom of man. Where Truth enters into the inward parts, as God desires, there it becomes the life of the Spirit. But it may also only reach the outer parts of the soul, the intellect and reason, and while it occupies and pleases there, and satisfies us with the imagination that it will thence exercise its influence, its power is nothing more than that of human argument and wisdom, that never reaches to the true life of the spirit. For there is a truth of the understanding and feelings, which is Only natural, the human image or form, the shadow of Divine Truth. There is a Truth which is substance and reality, communicating to him who holds it the actual possession, the life of the things of which others only think and speak. The truth in shadow, in form, in thought,was all the law could give; and in that the religion of the Jews consisted. The truth of substance, the Truth as a Divine life, was what Jesus brought as the Only-begotten, full of grace and truth. He is Himself 'the Truth.'

In promising the Holy Spirit to His -disciples, our Lord speaks of Him as the Spirit of Truth. That Truth, which He Himself is, that Truth and Grace and Life which He brought from heaven as a substantial spiritual reality to communicate to us, that Truth has its existence in the Spirit of God: He is the Spirit, the inner life of that Divine Truth. And when we receive Him, and just as far as we receive Him, and give up to Him, He makes Christ, and the Life of God, to be Truth in us divinely real; He gives it to be in us of a truth.In His teaching and guiding into the Truth, He does not give us only words and thoughts and images and impressions, coming to us from without, from a book or a teacher outside of us. He enters the secret roots of our life, and plants the Truth of God there as a seed, and dwells in it as a Divine Life. And where, in faith, and expectation, and surrender, this Hidden Life is

cherished and nourished, there He quickens and strengthens it, so that it grows stronger and spreads its branches through the whole being. And so, not from without but from within, not in word but in power, in Life and Truth, the Spirit reveals Christ and all He has for us. He makes the Christ, who has been to us so much only an image, a thought, a Saviour outside and above us, to be Truth within us. The Spirit brings with His incoming the Truth into us ; and then, having possessed us from within, guides us, as we can bear it, into all the truth.

In His promise to send the Spirit of Truth from the Father, our Lord very definitely tells us what His principal work would be-- 'He shall bear witness of ME.' He had just before said,'I am the Truth;' the Spirit of Truth can have no work but just to reveal and impart the fulness of Grace and Truth that there are in Christ Jesus. He came down from the glorified Lord in heaven to bear witness--within us, and so through us, of the reality and the power of the redemption which Christ has accomplished there. There are Christians who are afraid that to think much of the Spirit's presence within us will lead us away from the Saviour above us. A looking within to ourselves may do this; we may be sure that the silent, believing, adoring recognition of the Spirit within us will only lead to a fuller, a more true and spiritual apprehension that Christ alone is indeed all in all. 'He shall bear witness of me.' ' He shall glorify me.' It is He will make our knowledge of Christ Life and Truth, and experience of the Power with which He works and saves.'

To know what the disposition or state of mind is in which we can fully receive this guiding into all Truth, note the remarkable words our Lord uses concerning the Spirit: ' He shall guide you into all the Truth, for He shall not speak from Himself; but whatsoever things He shall hear, these shall He speak.' The mark of this Spirit of Truth is a wondrous Divine Teachableness. In the mystery of the Holy Trinity there is nothing more beautiful than this, that with a Divine equality on the part of the Son and the Spirit, there is also a perfect subordination. The Son could claim that men should honour Him even as they honoured the Father, and yet counted it no derogation from that honour to say, The Son can do nothing of Himself; as I hear, so I speak. And even so the Spirit of Truth never speaks from Himself. We should think He surely could speak from Himself; but no, only what He hears, that He speaks. The Spirit that fears to speak out of its own, that listens for God to speak, and only speaks when God speaks, this is the Spirit of Truth.

And this is the disposition He works, the life He breathes, in those who truly receive Him---that gentle teachableness which marks the poor in spirit, the broken in heart, who have become conscious that as worthless as their righteousness, is their wisdom, or power of apprehending spiritual truth ; that they need Christ as much for the one as the other, and that the Spirit within them alone can be the Spirit of Truth. He shows us how, even with the word of God in our hands and on our tongues, we may be utterly wanting in that waiting, docile, submissive spirit to which alone its spiritual meaning can be revealed. He opens our eyes to the reason why so much Bible reading, and Bible knowledge, and Bible preaching has so little fruit unto true holiness; because it is studied and held with a wisdom that is not from above, that was not asked for and waited for from God. The mark of the Spirit of Truth was wanting. He speaketh not, He thinketh not from Himself ; what He hears, that He speaks. The Spirit of Truth receives everything day by day, step by step, from God in heaven. He is silent, and does not speak, except and until He hears.

These thoughts suggest to us the great danger of the Christian life-seeking to know the Truth of God in His word without the distinct waiting on the Spirit of Truth in the heart. The tempter of Paradise still moves about among men. Knowledge is still his great temptation. How many Christians there are who could confess that their knowledge of Divine Truth does but little for them: it leaves them powerless against the world and sin; they know little of the light and the liberty, the strength and the joy the Truth was meant to bring. It is because they take to themselves God's truth in the power of human wisdom and human thought, and wait not for the Spirit of Truth to lead 'them into it.' Most earnest efforts to abide in Christ, to walk like Christ, have failed because their faith stood

more in the wisdom of man than in the power of God. Most blessed experiences have been short lived, because they knew not that the Spirit of Truth was within them to make Christ and His Holy Presence an abiding reality.

These thoughts suggest the great need of the Christian life. Jesus said, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and follow me.' Many a one follows Jesus without denying himself, And there is nothing that more needs denying than our own wisdom, the energy of the fleshly mind, as it exerts itself in the things of God.

Let us learn that in all our intercourse with God, in His word or prayer, in every act of worship, the first step ought to be a solemn act of abnegation, in which we deny our power to understand God's word, or to speak our words to Him, without the special Divine leading of the Holy Spirit. Christians need to deny even more than their own righteousness, their own wisdom; this is often the most difficult part of the denial of self. In all worship we need to realize the alone sufficiency and the absolute indispensableness, not only of the Blood, but as much of the Spirit of Jesus. This is the meaning of the call to be silent unto God, and in quiet to wait on Him ; to hush the rush of thoughts and words in God's presence, and in deep humility and stillness to wait, and listen, and hear what God will say. The Spirit of Truth never speaks from Himself: what He hears, that He speaks. A lowly, listening, teachable spirit is the mark of the presence of the Spirit of Truth.

And then, when we do wait, let us remember that even then the Spirit of Truth does not at once or first speak in thoughts that we can at once apprehend and express. These are but on the surface. To be true they must be rooted deep. They must have hidden depth in themselves. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth because He is the Spirit of Life: the Life is the Light. Not to thought or feeling does He speak in the first place, but in the hidden man of the heart, in the spirit of a man which is within him, in his inmost parts. It is only to faith that it is revealed what His teaching means, and what His guidance into the Truth. Let our first work therefore today again be to believe ; that is, to recognise the Living God in the work He undertakes to do. Let us believe in the Holy Spirit as the Divine Quickener and Sanctifier, who is already within us, and yield up all to Him. He will prove Himself the Divine Enlightener: the Life is the Light. Let the confession that we have no life or goodness of our own be accompanied by the confession that we have no wisdom either; the deeper our sense of this, the more precious will the promise of the Spirit's guidance become. And the deep assurance of having the Spirit of Truth within us will work in us the holy teacher's likeness, and the quiet hearkening to which the secrets of the Lord shall be revealed.

0 Lord God of Truth! in them that worship Thee, Thou seekest Truth in the inward parts. I do bless Thee again that Thou hast given me too the Spirit of Truth, and that He now dwells in me. I bow before Thee in lowly fear to ask that I may know Him aright, and walk before Thee in the living consciousness that the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Christ, who is the Truth, is indeed within me, the inmost self of my new life. May every thought and word, every disposition and habit, be the proof that the Spirit of Christ, who is the Truth, dwells and rules within me.

Especially do I ask Thee that He may witness to me of Christ Jesus. May the Truth of His atonement and blood, as it works with living efficacy in the upper sanctuary, dwell in me and I in it. May His Life and Glory no less be Truth in me, a living experience of His Presence and Power. 0 my Father ! may the Spirit of Thy Son, the Spirit of Truth, indeed be my life. May each word of Thy Son through Him be made true in me.

I do thank Thee once again, 0 my Father, that He dwelleth within me. I bow my knees that Thou wouldest grant that, according to the riches of Thy glory, He may work mightily in me and all Thy saints. Oh, that all Thy people may know this their privilege and rejoice in it: the Holy Spirit within them to reveal Christ, full of Grace and Truth, as Truth in them. Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 10

The Expediency of the Spirit's Coming

'I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come ; but if I go, I will send Him unto YOU.'-JOHN 16: 7.

As our Lord is leaving this world, He promises the disciples here that His departure will be their gain ; the Comforter will take His place, and be to them far better than He ever had been or could be in His bodily presence. This very specially in two aspects. His intercourse with them had never been unbroken, but liable to interruption; now it would even be broken off by death, and they would see Him no more. The Spirit would abide with them for ever. His own intercourse had been very much external, and, in consequence of this, had not resulted in what might have been expected. The Spirit would be in them; His coming would be as an Indwelling Presence, in the power of which they should have Jesus too in them as their Life and their Strength.

During the life of our Lord on earth, each of His disciples was dealt with by Him in accordance with his peculiar character, and the special circumstances in which he might be placed. The intercourse was an intensely personal one: in every thing He proved that He knew His sheep by name. For each there was a thoughtfulness and a wisdom that met just what was required. Would the Spirit supply this need too, and give back that tenderness of personal interest and that special individual dealing which had made the guidance of Jesus so precious ? We cannot doubt it. All that Christ had been to them, the Spirit was to restore in greater power, and in a blessedness that should know no break. They were to be far happier and safer and stronger with Jesus in heaven, than they ever could have been with Him on earth. This, the chief beauty and blessedness of their discipleship of such a Master, that He was so wise and patient to give to each one just what he needed and to make each one feel that he had in Him his best friend, could never be left out. The indwelling of the Spirit was meant to restore Christ's most personal intercourse and guidance, His direct personal friendship.

It is to many a matter of great difficulty to conceive of this or to believe it; much less do they experience it. The thought of Christ walking with men on earth, living and guiding them, is so clear; the thought of a Spirit hiding Himself within us, and speaking, not in distinct thoughts, but only in the secret depths of the life, makes His guidance so much more difficult.

And yet just what constitutes the greater difficulty of the new, the spiritual intercourse and guidance, is what gives it its greater worth and blessedness. It is the same principle we see in daily life: difficulty calls out the powers, strengthens the will, develops character, and makes the man. In a child's first lessons he has to be helped and encouraged ; as he goes on to what is more difficult, the teacher leaves him to his own resources. A youth leaves his parents' roof to have the principles that have been instilled tested and strengthened. In each case it is expedient that the outward presence and help be withdrawn, and the soul be thrown upon itself to apply and assimilate the lessons it had been taught. God wants to educate us, indeed, to a perfect manhood, not ruled by an outward law, but by the inner life. As long as Jesus was with the disciples on earth, He had to work from without inward, and yet could never effectually reach or master the inmost parts. When He went away He sent the Spirit

to be in them, that now their growth might be from within outward. Taking possession first by His Spirit of the inmost secret recesses of their being, He would have them, in the voluntary consent and surrender to His inspiration and guidance, personally become what He Himself is, through His Spirit in them. So they would have the framing of their life, the forming of their character, in their own hands, in the power of the Divine Spirit, who really had become their spirit. So they would grow up to that true self-standingness, that true independence of the outward, in which they should become like Himself, a true, separate person, having life in himself, and yet only living in the Father.

As long as the Christian only asks what is easy and pleasant, he will never understand that it is expedient, really better for us, that Christ should not be on earth. But as soon as the thoughts of difficulty and sacrifice are set aside, in the honest desire to become a truly God-like man, bearing the full image of the first-born Son, and in all things living well pleasing to the Father, the thought of Jesus' departure that His Spirit may now become our very own, and we be exercised and disciplined in the life of faith, will be welcomed with gladness and gratitude. If to follow the leading of the Spirit, and experience the personal friendship and guidance of Jesus in it, be a much more difficult and dangerous path than it would have been to follow Him on earth, we must remember the privilege we enjoy, the nobility we attain, the intimacy of fellowship with God we enter into, - all these are infinitely greater. To have the Holy Spirit of God coming through the human nature of our Lord, entering, into our spirits, identifying Himself with us, and becoming our very own just as He was the Spirit of Christ Jesus on earth, surely this is a blessedness worth any sacrifice, for it is the beginning of the indwelling of God Himself.

But to see that it is such a privilege and to desire it very earnestly does not remove the difficulty. And so the question comes again: the intercourse of Jesus with His disciples on earth, so condescending in its tenderness, so particular and minute in its interest, so consciously personal in its love, how can this be ours in the same degree now that He is absent, and the Spirit is to be our guide ? The first answer here, is, as through the whole Christian life, by faith. With Jesus on earth, the disciples, when once they had believed, walked by sight, We walk by faith. In faith, we must accept and rejoice in the word of Jesus: 'It is expedient for you that I go away.' We must take time distinctly to believe it, to approve of it, to rejoice that He is gone to the Father. We must learn to thank and praise Him that He has called us to this life in the Spirit. We must believe that in this gift of the Spirit the presence and intercourse of our Lord are fully secured to us most certainly and effectually. It may indeed be in a way we do not yet understand, because we have so little believed and rejoiced in the gift of the Holy Spirit. But faith must believe and praise for what it does not yet understand; let us believe assuredly and joyfully that the Holy Spirit, and Jesus Himself through Him, will teach us how the intercourse and guidance are to be enjoyed.

Will teach us. Beware of misunderstanding these words. We always connect teaching with thoughts. We want the Spirit to suggest to us certain conceptions of how Jesus will be with us and in us. And this is not what He does. The Spirit does not dwell in the mind, but in the life. Not in what we know, but in what we are does the Spirit begin His work. Do not let us seek or expect at once a clear apprehension, a new insight, into this or any Divine truth. Knowledge, thought, feeling, action, all this is a part of that external religion which the external presence of Jesus had also wrought in the disciples. The Spirit was now to come, and, deeper down than all these, He was to be the Hidden Presence of Jesus within the depths of their personality. The Divine Life was in a newness of power to become their life. And the teaching of the Spirit would begin, not in word or thought, but in Power. In the Power of a Life working in them secretly, but with Divine energy; in the Power of a Faith that rejoiced that Jesus was really near, was really taking charge of the whole life and every circumstance of it; the Spirit would inspire them with the faith of the Indwelling Jesus. This would be the beginning and the blessedness of His teaching. They would have the Life of Jesus within them, and they would by faith know that it was Jesus: their faith would be at once cause and effect of the Presence of the Lord in the Spirit.

It is by such a faith--a faith which the Spirit breathes, which comes from His being and living in us--that the Presence of Jesus is to be as real and all-sufficient as when He was on earth. But why then is it that believers who have the Spirit do not experience it more consciously and fully! The answer is very simple: they know and honour the Spirit who is in them so little. They have much faith in Jesus who died, or who reigns in heaven, but little faith in Jesus who dwells in them by His Spirit. It is this we need: faith in Jesus as the fulfiller of the promise, 'He that believeth in me, rivers of living water shall flow out of him.' We must believe that the Holy Spirit is within us as the Presence of our Lord Jesus. And we must not only believe this with the faith of the understanding as it seeks to persuade itself of the truth of what Christ says. We must believe with the heart, a heart in which the Holy Spirit dwells. The whole gift of the Spirit, the whole teaching of Jesus concerning the Spirit, is to enforce the word: 'The Kingdom of God is within you.' If we would have the true faith of the heart, let us turn inward, and very gently and humbly yield to the Holy Spirit to do His work in us.

To receive this teaching and this faith, which standeth in the Life and Power of the Spirit, let us above all fear that which hinders Him most, -- will and the wisdom of man. We are still surrounded by a life of self, of the flesh ; in the service of God, even in the effort to exercise faith, it is ever putting itself forward, and putting forth its strength. Every thought, not only every evil thought, but every thought, however good, in which our mind runs before the Spirit, must be brought into captivity. Let us lay our own will and our own wisdom captive at the feet of Jesus, and wait in faith and holy stillness of soul there. The deep, consciousness will grow strong that the Spirit is within us, and that His Divine Life is living and growing within us. As we thus honour Him, and give up to Him, as we bring our fleshly activity into subjection and wait on Him, He will not put us to shame, but do His work within us. He will strengthen our inner life; He will quicken our faith; He will reveal Jesus; and we shall, step by step, learn that the Presence and Personal Intercourse and Guidance of Jesus are ours as clearly and sweetly, yea, more truly and mightily, than if He were with us on earth.'

Blessed Lord Jesus! I do rejoice that Thou art no longer here on earth. I do bless Thee that in a fellowship more real, more near, more tender, more effectual than if Thou wert still here on earth, Thou dost manifest Thyself to Thy disciples. I do bless Thee that Thy Holy Spirit dwells within me, and gives me to know what that fellowship is, and what the realness of Thy holy indwelling.

Most Holy Lord! forgive that I have not known Thy Spirit sooner and better, that I have not praised and loved Thee aright for this most wonderful gift of Thine and the Father's love. And do teach me in the fulness of faith to believe in Thee, from whom, day by day, the fresh anointing flows and fills the life.

And hear me, Lord, when I cry to Thee on behalf of so many of Thy redeemed ones, who do not yet even see what it is to give up and lose the mixed life after the flesh, to receive in its stead the life that is in the power of the Spirit. With many of Thy saints, I do beseech Thee, oh, grant that the Church may be wakened to know how the one mark of her election, the one secret of her enjoyment of Thy Presence, the one power for fulfilling her calling, is that each believer be led to know that the Spirit dwelleth within him, and that the abiding Presence of his Lord with him as Keeper, and Guide, and Friend is indeed his sure portion. Grant it, Lord, for Thy name's sake. Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 11

The Spirit Glorifying Christ

It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come ; but if I go, I will send Him unto you. . . . He shall glorify me : for He shall take of mine, and declare it unto you.'-John 16: 7, 14,

THERE is a twofold glorifying of the Son of which Scripture speaks. The one is by the Father, the other by the Spirit: the one takes place in heaven, the other here on earth. By the one He is glorified 'in God Himself;' by the other, 'in us' (John 13: 32, 17:10). Of the former Jesus spake: 'If God be glorified in Him (the Son of Man), God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him.' And again, in the high-priestly prayer, 'Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son.... And now, 0 Father, glorify me with Thyself.' Of the latter He said: 'The Spirit shall glorify me.' ' I am glorified in them.'

To glorify is to manifest the hidden excellence and worth of an object. Jesus, the Son of Man was to be glorified when His human nature was admitted to the full participation of the power and glory in which God dwells. He entered into the perfect spirit - life of the heavenly world, of the Divine Being. And all the angels worshipped Him as the Lamb on the Throne. This heavenly, spiritual glory of Christ the human mind cannot conceive or apprehend in truth. It can only be truly known by being experienced, by being communicated and participated in the inner life. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of the glorified Christ, He comes down as the Spirit of Glory, and reveals the glory of Christ in us by dwelling and working in us, in the life and the power of that glory in which Christ dwelleth. He makes Christ glorious to us and in us. And so He glorifies Him in us, and through us in them who have eyes to see. The Son seeks not His own glory: the Father glorifies Him in heaven, the Spirit glorifies Him in our hearts.

But before this glorifying of Christ by the Spirit could take place, He must first needs go away from His disciples. They could not have Him in the flesh and in the Spirit too; His bodily presence would hinder the spiritual indwelling. They must part with the Christ they had ere they could receive the indwelling Christ glorified by the Holy Spirit. Christ Himself had to give up the life He had ere He could be glorified in heaven or in us. Even so, in union with Him, we must give up the Christ we have known, the measure of the life we have had in Him, if we are indeed to have Him glorified to us and in us by the Holy Spirit.

I am persuaded that just here is the point at which very many of God's dear children need the teaching' 'It is expedient that I go away.' Like His disciples, they have believed in Jesus; they love and obey Him; they have experienced much of the inexpressible blessedness of knowing and following Him. And yet they feel that the deep rest and joy, the holy light and the Divine power of His abiding Indwelling, as they see it in Holy Scripture, is not yet theirs. Now in secret, and then under the blessed influence of the fellowship of the saints, or the teaching of God's ministers in church or convention, they have been helped and wonderfully blessed. Christ has become very precious. And yet they see something still before them, promises not perfectly fulfilled, wants not fully satisfied. The only reason can be this: they have not yet fully inherited the promise: 'The Comforter shall abide with you, and He shall be in you. He shall glorify me.' The 'expediency of Christ's going away, to come

again glorified in the Spirit, they do not fully understand. They have not yet been able to say, 'Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now know we Him so no more!

I Knowing Christ after the flesh:' it is this must come to an end, must make way for knowing Him in the power of the Spirit. After the flesh : that means, in the power of the external, of words and thoughts, of efforts and feelings, of influences and aids coming from without, from men and means. The believer who has received the Holy Spirit, but does not know fully what this implies, and so does not give up entirely to His indwelling and leading, still, to a great extent, has confidence in the flesh. Admitting that he can do nothing without the Spirit, he still labours and struggles vainly to believe and live as he knows he should. Confessing most heartily, and at times experiencing most blessedly, that Christ alone is his life and strength, it grieves and almost wearies him to think how often he fails in the maintenance of that attitude of trustful dependence in which Christ can live out His life .in him. He tries to believe all there is to be believed of Christ's nearness and keeping and indwelling, and yet, somehow, there are still breaks and interruptions ; it is as if faith is not what it should be--the substance of the things we had hoped for. The reason must be that the faith itself was still too much the work of the mind, in the power of the flesh, in the wisdom of man. There has indeed been a revelation of Christ the Faithful Keeper, the Abiding Friend, but that revelation has been, in part, taken hold of by the flesh and the fleshly mind. This has made it powerless. Christ, the Christ of glory, the doctrine of the Indwelling Christ, has been received into the mixed life, partly flesh and partly spirit. It is only the Spirit can glorify Christ: we must give up and cast away the old way of knowing and believing and having Christ. We must know Christ no more after the flesh. 'The Spirit shall glorify me.'

But what does it mean that the Spirit glorifies Christ? What is this glory of Christ that He reveals, and how does He do it ? What the glory of Christ is we learn from Scripture. We read in Hebrews, 'We see not yet all things made subject to man. But we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour.' To Him all things have been made subject. So our Lord connects His being glorified, in both the passages we have taken as our text, with all things being given to Him. 'He shall glorify me, for He shall take of mine. All things, whatsoever the Father hath, are mine; therefore, said I, that He taketh of mine, and shall declare it unto you.' 'All things that are mine are Thine, and Thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.' In exalting Him above all rule and power and dominion, the Father hath put all things in subjection under His feet: He gave unto Him the Name which is above every name, that in the Name of Jesus every knee should bow. The Kingdom and the Power and the Glory are ever one: Unto Him that sitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb in the midst of the Throne, be the Glory and the Dominion for ever. It is as sitting on the Throne of the Divine Glory, with all things put in subjection under His feet (Eph. 1:20-22), that Jesus has been glorified in heaven.'

When the Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus in us, He reveals Him to us in this His glory. He takes of the things of Christ and declares them to us. That is not, He gives us a thought, or image, or vision of that glory, as it is above us in heaven; but He shows it to us as a personal experience and possession - He makes us in our inmost life partake of it. He shows Christ as present in us. All the true, living knowledge we have of Christ is through the Spirit of God. When Christ comes into us as a feeble infant; when He grows and increases and is formed within us; when we learn to trust and follow and serve Him --this is all of the Holy Spirit. All this, however, may consist, even as in the disciples, with much darkness and failure. But when the Holy Spirit does His perfect work, and reveals the Glorified Lord, the Throne of His Glory is set up in the heart, and He rules over every enemy. Every power is brought into subjection, every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Through the whole of the renewed nature ,there rises the song, 'Glory to Him that sitteth on the Throne! Though the confession holds true to the end, 'In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing,' the Holy Presence of Christ as Ruler and Governor so fills the heart and life that His Dominion ruleth over all. Sin has no dominion: the law of the Spirit of the Life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

If this be the glorifying of Christ which the Spirit brings, it is easy to see what the way is that leads to it. The Enthronement of Jesus in His glory can only take place in the heart that has promised implicit and unreserved obedience, that has had the courage to believe that He will take His power and reign, and in that faith expects that every enemy will be kept under His feet. It feels that it needs, it is willing to have, it claims and, accepts, Christ as Lord of All, with everything in the life, great or small, taken possession of and guided by Him, through His Holy Spirit. It is in the loving, obedient disciple the Spirit is promised to dwell ; in him the Spirit glorifies Christ.

This only can take place when the fulness of time has come to the believing soul. The history of the Church, as a whole, repeats itself in each individual. Until the time appointed of the Father, who hath the times and seasons in His own hands, the heir is under guardians and stewards, and differeth nothing from a bond-servant. When the fulness of time is come, and faith is perfected, the Spirit of the Glorified One enters in power, and Christ dwells in the heart. Yea, the history of Christ Himself repeats itself in the soul. In the temple there were two holy places-the one before the veil, the other within the veil, the Most Holy. In His earthly life Christ dwelt and ministered in the Holy Place without the veil: the veil of the flesh kept Him out of the Most Holy. It was only when the veil of the flesh was rent, and he died to sin completely and for ever, that He could enter the Inner Sanctuary of the full glory of the Spirit-life in heaven. And just so the believer who longs to have Jesus glorified within the Spirit, must, however blessed his life has been in the knowledge and service of his Lord, learn that there is something better. In him, too, the veil of the flesh must be rent; he must enter this special part of Christ's work through the new and living way into the Holiest of All. ' He hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.' As the soul sees how completely Jesus has triumphed over the flesh, and entered with His flesh into the Spirit-Life, how perfect in virtue of that triumph is Power over all in our flesh that could hinder, perfect in the power of the Spirit the Entrance ,the Indwelling of Jesus as Keeper and King be, the veil is taken away, and the life hitherto the holy place is now one in the Most Holy, in the full Presence of the Glory.'

This rending of the veil, this Enthronement of Jesus as the Glorified One in the heart, is not always with the sound of trumpet and shouting. It may be thus at times, and with some, but in other cases it takes place amid the deep awe and trembling of a stillness where not a sound is heard. Zion's King comes, meek and lowly,with the Kingdom to the poor in spirit. Without form or comeliness He enters in, and, when thought and feeling fail, the Holy Spirit glorifies Him to the faith that sees not but believes. The eye of flesh saw Him not on the Throne; to the world it was a mystery; and so, just when all within appears feeble and empty, the Spirit secretly works the Divine assurance, and then the blessed experience, that Christ the Glorified has taken up His abode within. The soul knows, in silent worship and adoration, that Jesus is Master, that His Throne in the heart is established in righteousness; that the promise is now fulfilled, The Spirit shall glorify me.'

Blessed Lord Jesus! I worship Thee in the glory which the Father hath given Thee. And I bless Thee for the promise that that glory shall be revealed in the hearts of Thy disciples, to dwell in them and fill them. This is Thy glory, that all that the Father hath is now Thine: of this Thy glory in its infinite fulness and power Thou hast said the Holy Spirit shall take to show it unto us. Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory: the hearts and lives of Thy beloved may be filled with it too. Lord, let it be so !

Blessed be Thy holy name for all in whom the rich beginning of the fulfilment hath already come ! Lord, let it go on from glory to glory. To this end teach us, we pray Thee, to maintain our separation to Thee unbroken: heart and life shall be Thine alone. To this end teach us to hold fast our confidence without wavering, that the Spirit who is within us will perfect His work. Above all, teach us to yield ourselves in ever increasing dependence and emptiness to wait for the Spirit's teaching and leading. We do desire to have no confidence in the flesh, its wisdom, or its righteousness. We would bow ever lower and deeper before Thee in the holy fear and reverence of the faith that Thy Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Thy glory, is within us to do His Divine work. Blessed

Lord! let Him rise in great power, and have dominion within us, that our heart may by Him be fully made the Temple and the Kingdom in which Thou alone art glorified, in which Thy glory filleth all. Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 12

The Spirit Convincing of Sin.

If I go, I will send the Comforter unto you; and He, when He is come, will convince the world in respect of sin.
John 16: 7-8

The close connection between the two statements in these words of our Lord is not always noticed. Before the Holy Spirit was to convince the world of sin, He was first to come into the disciples. He was to make His home, to take His stand in them,, and then from out of them and through them to do His conviction work on the world. He shall bear witness of me, and ye shall also bear witness.' The disciples were to realize that the great work of the Holy Spirit, striving with man, convincing the world of sin, could only be done as He had a firm footing on earth in them. They were to be baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, to receive the Power from on high, with the one purpose of being the instruments through whom the Holy Spirit could reach the world. The mighty, sin convicting power of the Spirit to dwell in them and work through them: it was for this our blessed Lord sought to prepare them and us by these words. The lessons they teach are very solemn.

1. The Holy Spirit comes to us, that through us He may reach others. The Spirit is the Spirit of the Holy One, of the redeeming God: when He enters us, He does not change His nature or lose His Divine character. He is still the Spirit of God striving with man, and seeking his deliverance. Wherever He is not hindered by ignorance or selfishness, He looks out from the heart as His temple for the work He has to do on the world around, and makes it willing and bold to do that work; to testify against sin, and for Jesus the Saviour from sin, He does this very specially as being the Spirit of the crucified and exalted Christ. For what purpose was it that He received the Spirit without measure ? 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor. He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives! It was this same Spirit--after Christ through Him had offered Himself unto God, and through Him as the Spirit of Holiness had been raised from the dead-whom He sent down on His Church, that now the Spirit might have a home in them, as He had had it in Himself. And no otherwise and no less than in Himself would the Divine Spirit in them pursue His Divine work, and as a Light shining in, and revealing, and condemning, and conquering the darkness, as ' the Spirit of burning and the Spirit of judgment,' be to the world the power of a Divine conviction and conversion. Not from heaven direct so much, as the Spirit of God, but as the Holy Spirit dwelling in the Church, would He convince the world. 'I will send Him to you, and when He is come, He will convince the world.' It is in and through us that the Spirit can reach the world.

2. The Spirit can only reach others through us by first bringing ourselves into perfect sympathy with Himself. He enters into us to become so one with us that He becomes as a disposition and a life within us; and His work in us, and through us in others, becomes identical with our work.

The application of this truth to the conviction of sin in the world is one of great solemnity. The words of our Lord are frequently applied to believers in reference to the continued conviction of sin which He will ever have to work within them. In this sense they are, indeed, most true. This first work of the Spirit remains to the end the

undertone of all His Comforting and Sanctifying work. It is only as He keeps alive the tender sense of the danger and shame of again sinning, that the soul will be kept in its low place before God,-hiding in Jesus as alone its safety and its strength. As the Holy Ghost reveals and communicates the Holy Life of Christ within, the sure result will be a deeper sense of the sinfulness of sin. But the words mean more. If the Spirit through us, through our testimony, whether by word or walk, is to convince the world, He must first convince us, of its sin. He must give us personally such a sight and sense of the guilt of its unbelief and rejection of our Saviour, such a sight and sense of each of its sins, as being at once the cause, the proof, the fruit of that rejection, that we shall in some measure think and feel in regard to the sin as He does. There will be then that inner fitness in us for the Spirit to work through us, that inner unity between our witness and His witness against sin and for God, which will reach the conscience and carry conviction with a power that is from above.

Alas!how easy it is in the power of the flesh to judge others, in the spirit which sees not the beam in our own eye, or which, if we are indeed free from what we condemn, yet does it with a secret, 'Stand by, I am holier than thou.' We either testify and 'work in a wrong spirit and in our own strength, or have not the courage to work at all. It is because we see the sin and the sinfulness of others, but not in a conviction that comes from the Holy Spirit. When He convinces us of the sin of the world, His work bears two marks. The one is the sacrifice of self, in the jealousy for God and His honour, combined with the deep and tender grief for the guilty. The other is a deep, strong faith in the possibility and power of deliverance. We see each sin in its terrible relation to the whole; we see the whole in the double light of the cross. We see sin unspeakably hateful in its awful guilt against God and its fearful power over the poor soul: we see sin condemned, atoned, put away, and conquered in Jesus. We learn to look on the world as God looks upon it in His holiness: hating its sin with such an infinite hatred, and loving it with such a love, that He gives His Son, and the Son gives His life, to destroy it and set its captives free.

May God give His people a true and deep conviction of the sin of the world in its rejection of Christ, even in the midst of its profession of believing in Him and serving Him, as the fitting preparation for the Spirit's using them in convincing the world of sin.

3. To obtain this conviction of sin, the believer needs not only to pray for it, but to have his whole life under the leading of the Holy Spirit. We cannot too earnestly insist upon it, that the many different gifts of the Spirit all depend upon His personal indwelling and supremacy in the inner life, and the revelation in us of the Christ that gave His life to have sin destroyed. When our Lord spake that word of inexhaustible meaning, ' He shall be in you,' he opened up the secret of all the Spirit's teaching, and sanctifying, and strengthening. The Spirit is the Life of God; He enters in, and becomes our Life; it is as He can sway and inspire the life that He will be able to work in us all He wills. It is desirable and useful to direct the attention of the believer to the different operations of the Spirit, that he may neglect or lose nothing through ignorance. But it is still more needful, with each new insight into what the Spirit can work, to get firmer hold of the truth : Let the life be in the Spirit, and the special blessing will not be withheld. Would you have this deep spiritual conviction of the sin of the world such an affecting sense of its terrible reality and power, its exceeding sinfulness, as will fit you for being the man through whom the Spirit can convince sinners, just yield your whole life and being to the Holy Spirit. Let the thought of this wondrous mystery of the nearness, the Indwelling, of the Holy God in you quiet your mind and heart into lowly fear and worship. Surrender the great enemy that opposes Him--the flesh, the self-life--day by day to Him to mortify and keep dead. Be content to aim at nothing less than being filled with the Spirit of the Man whose glory it is that He gave Himself to death to take away sin, with the whole being and doing under His control and inspiration. As your life in the Spirit becomes healthy and strong, as your spiritual constitution gets invigorated, your eye will see more clearly, your heart feel more keenly, what the sin around you is. Your thoughts and feelings will be those of the Holy Spirit breathing in you; your deep horror of sin, your deep faith in the redemption from it, your deep love to the souls who are in it, your willingness like your Lord to die if men can be

freed from sin, will make you the fit instrument for the Spirit to convince the world of its sin.

4. There is one more lesson. We are seeking in this little book to find the way by which we all can be filled with the Spirit. Here is one condition: He must dwell in us as the world's Convincer of sin, I will send Him unto you, and He will convince the world.' Offer yourself to Him to consider, and feel, and bear the sins of those around you. Let the sins of the world be your concern, as much as your own sin. Do they not dishonour God as much as yours ? Are they not equally provided for in the great redemption ? And does not the Spirit dwelling in you long to convince them too ? Just as the Holy Spirit dwelt in the body and nature of Jesus, and was the source of what He felt, and said, and did, and just as God through Him worked out the will of His holy love; so the Spirit now dwells in believers: they are His abode. The one purpose for which there has been a Christ in the world, for which there is now a Holy Spirit, was that sin may be conquered and made an end of. This is the great object for which the baptism of the Spirit and of fire was given, that in and through believers He might convince of sin, and deliver from it. Put yourself into contact with the world's sin. Meet it in the love and faith of Jesus Christ, as the servant and helper of the needy and the wretched. Give yourself to prove the reality of your faith in Christ by your likeness to Him: so will the Spirit convince the world of its unbelief. Seek the full experience of the indwelling Spirit, not for your own selfish enjoyment, but for this one end, that He can do the Father's work through you as He did through Christ. Live, in unity of love with other believers, to work and pray, that men may be saved out of sin: 'then will the world believe that God hath sent Him.' It is the life of believers in self-sacrificing love that will prove to the world that Christ is a reality, and so convince it of its sin of unbelief.

The comfort and success with which a man lives and carries on his business depends much upon his having a suitable building for it. When the Holy Spirit, in a believer, finds the whole heart free and given up to Him as His home, to fill it with God's thoughts of sin and God's power of redemption, He can through such a one do His work. Be assured that there is no surer way to receive a full measure of the Spirit than to be wholly yielded to Him, to let the very mind of Christ in regard to sin work in us. 'He took away sin by the sacrifice of Himself,' through the Eternal Spirit. What the Spirit was in Him, He seeks to be in us. What was true of Him, must in its measure be true of us.

Christians ! would you be filled with the Holy Spirit, seek to have a clear impression of this : the Holy Spirit is in you to convince the world of sin. If you sympathize thoroughly with Him in this, if He sees that He can use you for this, if you make His work in this matter your work too, you may be sure He will dwell in you richly, and work in you mightily. The one object for which Christ came was to put away sin; the one work for which the Holy Ghost comes to men is to persuade them to give up sin. The one object for which the believer lives is to join in the battle against sin ; to seek the will and the honour of his God. Do let us be at one with Christ and His Spirit in their testimony against sin. An exhibition of the life and Spirit of Christ will have its effect : the holiness, and the joy, and the love, and the obedience to Christ will convince the world of its sin of unbelief. The Presence of Christ in us through the Spirit will carry its own conviction. And just as Christ's death, as His sacrifice for sin, was the entrance to His glory in the power of the Spirit, so our experience of the Spirit's indwelling will become the fuller just as our whole life is more given up to Him for His holy work of convincing the world of sin.

Blessed Lord Jesus! it is by the Presence and Power of the Holy Spirit in Thy people that the world is to be convinced of its sin in rejecting Thee, and that sinners are to be brought out of the world to accept of Thee. It is in men and women full of the Holy Ghost, testifying in the power of a holy joy to what Thou hast done for them, that the proof is to be given that Thou art indeed at the right hand of God. It is in a body of living witnesses to what Thou hast done for them, that the world is to find the irresistible conviction of its folly and guilt.

Alas! Lord, how little the world has seen of this. We do call upon Thee, in deep humiliation, Lord Jesus, make

haste and rouse Thy Church to the knowledge of its calling. Oh that every believer in his personal life, and all Thy believing people in their fellowship, might prove to the world what reality, what blessedness, what power there is in the faith of Thee ! May the world believe that the Father hath sent Thee, and has loved them as He loveth Thee.

Lord Jesus, lay the burden of the sin of the world so heavy on the hearts of Thy people, that it may become impossible for them to live for anything but this; to be the members of Thy body, in whom Thy Spirit dwells, and to prove Thy presence to the world. Take away everything that hinders Thee from manifesting Thy presence and saving power in us. Lord Jesus, Thy Spirit is come to us to convince the world: let Him come and work in ever-growing power. Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 13

Waiting for the Spirit.

He charged them to wait for the promise of the Father, which said he, ye heard from me.'-ACTS 1: 4.

In the life of the Old Testament saints ,waiting was one of the loved words in which they expressed the posture of their souls towards God. They waited for God, and waited upon God. Sometimes we find it in Holy Scripture as the language of an experience: 'Truly my soul waiteth upon God.' 'I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait.' At others it is a plea in prayer: 'Lead me, on Thee do I wait all the day.' ' Be gracious unto us; we have waited for Thee,' Frequently it is an injunction, encouraging to perseverance in a work that is not without its difficulty: 'Wait on the Lord; wait, I say, on the Lord.' 'Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.' And then again there is the testimony to the blessedness of the exercise: 'Blessed are they that wait upon Him.' ' They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.'

All this blessed teaching and experience of the saints who have gone before, our Lord gathers up and connects specially, in His use of the word, with the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit. What had been so deeply woven into the very substance of the religious life and language of God's people was now to receive a new and a higher application. As they had waited for the manifestation of God, either in the light of His countenance on their own souls, or in special interposition for their deliverance, or in His coming to fulfil His promises to His people; so we too have to wait. But now that the Father has been revealed in the Son, and that the Son has perfected the great redemption, now the waiting is specially to be occupied with the fulfilment of the great Promise in which the love of the Father and the grace of the Son are revealed and made ours the Gift, the Indwelling, the Fulness of the Holy Spirit. We wait on the Father and the Son for ever-increasing inflowings and workings of the Blessed Spirit; we wait for the Blessed Spirit, His moving, and leading, and mighty strengthening, to reveal the Father and the Son within, and to work in us all the holiness and service to which the Father and the Son are calling us.

'He charged them to wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me.' It may be asked whether these words have not exclusive reference to the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and whether, now that the Spirit has been given to the Church, the charge still holds good. It may be objected that, for the believer who has the Holy Spirit within him, waiting for the promise of the Father is hardly consistent with the faith and joy of the consciousness that the Spirit has been received and is dwelling within.

The question and the objection open the way to a lesson of the deepest importance. The Holy Spirit is not given to us as a possession of which we have the charge and mastery, and which we can use at our discretion. No. The Holy Spirit is given -to us to be our Master, and to have charge of us. It is not we who are to use Him; He must use us. He is indeed ours; but ours as God, and our position towards Him is that of deep and entire dependence on One who giveth to every one 'even as He will.' The Father has indeed given us the Spirit; but He is still, and only works as the Spirit of the Father. Our asking for His working, that the Father would grant unto us to be strengthened with might by His Spirit, and our waiting for this, must be as real and definite as if we had to ask for Him for the first time. When God gives His Spirit, He gives His inmost Self. He gives with a Divine giving, that

is, in the power of the eternal life, continuous, uninterrupted, and never-ceasing. When Jesus gave to those who believe in Him the promise of an ever-springing fountain of ever-flowing streams, He spake not of a single act of faith that was once for all to make them the independent possessors of the blessing, but of a life of faith that, in neverceasing receptivity, would always and only possess His gifts in living union with Himself. And so this precious word wait,-'He charged them to wait,'-with all its blessed meaning from the experience of the past, is woven into the very web of the new Spirit dispensation. And all that the disciples did and felt during those ten days of waiting, and all that they got as its blessed fruit and reward, becomes to us the path and the pledge of the life of the Spirit in which we can live. The fulness of the Spirit, for such is the Father's Promise, and our waiting, are inseparably and for ever linked together.

And have we not here now an answer to the question why so many believers know so little of the joy and the power of the Holy Spirit ? They never knew to wait for it; they never listened ,carefully to the Master's parting words: 'He charged them to wait for the Promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me'. The Promise they have heard. For its fulfilment they have longed. In earnest prayer they have pleaded for it. They have gone burdened and mourning under the felt want. They have tried to believe, and tried to lay hold, and tried to be filled with the Spirit. But they have never known what it was with it all to wait. They have never here said,or even truly heard, 'Blessed are all they that wait for Him.' ' They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.'

But what is this waiting? And how are we to wait ? I look to God by His Holy Spirit to teach me to state in the simplest way possible what may help some child of His to obey this charge. And let me then first say that, as a believer, what you are to wait for is the fuller manifestation of the Power of the Spirit within you. On the resurrection morn Jesus had breathed on His disciples, and said, Receive the Holy Ghost : they had yet to wait for the full baptism of fire and of power. As God's child you have the Holy Ghost. Study the passages in the Epistles addressed to believers full of failings and sins (1 Cor. 3: 1 -3, 16, 6: 19, 2 0 ; Gal. 3: 2, 3, 4: 6). Begin in simple faith in God's word to cultivate the quiet assurance: The Holy Spirit is dwelling within me. If you are not faithful in the less, you cannot expect the greater. Acknowledge in faith and thanks that the Holy Spirit is in you. Each time you enter your closet to speak to God, sit first still to remember and believe that the Spirit is within you as the Spirit of prayer who cries Father! within you. Appear before God and confess to Him distinctly, until you become fully conscious of it yourself, that you are a temple of the Holy Ghost.

Now you are in the right posture for taking the second step, that is, asking God very simply and quietly, there and then, to grant you the workings of His Holy Spirit. The Spirit is in God and is in you. You ask the Father who is in heaven that His Almighty Spirit may come forth from Him in greater life and power, and as the indwelling Spirit may work more mightily in you. As you ask this on the ground of the promises, or of some special promise you lay before Him, you believe that He hears and that He does it. You have not to look at once whether you feel anything in your heart; all may be dark and cold there; you are to believe, that is, to rest in what God is going to do, yea, is doing, though you feel it not.

And then comes the waiting. Wait on the Lord; wait for the Spirit. In great quietness set your soul still, silent unto God, and give the Holy Spirit time to quicken and deepen in you the assurance that God will grant Him to work mightily. We are a 'holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifice.' The slaying of the sacrifice was an essential part of the service. In each sacrifice you bring there must be the slaying, the surrender and sacrifice of self and its power to the death, As you wait before God in holy silence, He sees in it the confession that you have nothing,-no wisdom to pray aright, no strength to work aright, Waiting is the expression of need, of emptiness. All along through the Christian life these go together , the sense of poverty and weakness, and the joy of all sufficient riches and strength. It is in waiting before God that the soul sinks down into its own nothingness, and is lifted up into the Divine assurance that God has accepted its sacrifice and will fulfil its desires.

When thus the soul, has waited upon God, it has to go forward to the daily walk or the special duty that waits it, in the faith that He will watch over the fulfilment of His Promise and His child's expectation. If it is to prayer you give yourself, after thus waiting for the Spirit, or to the reading of the word, do it in the trust that the Holy Spirit within guides your prayer and your thoughts. If your experience appears to prove that it is not so, be sure this is simply to lead you onwards to a simpler faith and a more entire surrender. You have become so accustomed to the worship in the power of the understanding and the carnal mind, that truly spiritual worship does not come at once. But wait on: 'He charged them to wait.' Keep up the waiting disposition in daily life and duty. 'On Thee do I wait all the day:' it is to the Three One God I thus speak; the Holy Spirit brings nigh and unites to Him. Renew each day and, as you are able to do it, also extend, your exercise of waiting upon God. The multitude of words and the fervency of feelings in prayer have often been more hindrance than help. God's work in you must become deeper, more spiritual, more directly wrought of God Himself. Wait for the promise in all its fulness. Count not the time lost you thus give to this blessed expression of ignorance and emptiness, of faith and expectation, of full and real surrender to the dominion of the Spirit. Pentecost is meant to be for all times the proof of what the exalted Jesus does for His Church from His Throne. The ten days' waiting is meant to be for all time the posture before the Throne, which secures in continuity the Pentecostal blessing, Brother ! the Promise of the Father is sure.It is from whom you have it. The Spirit is Himself already working in you. His full indwelling and guidance is your child's-portion. Oh, keep the charge of your Lord! Wait on God: wait for the Spirit. 'Wait, I say, on the Lord.' 'Blessed are all they that wait for Him.'

Blessed Father ! from Thy Beloved Son we have heard Thy Promise. In a streaming forth that is Divine and neverceasing, the river of the water of life flows from under the Throne of God and the Lamb; Thy Spirit flows down to quicken our thirsty souls. 'For we have not heard, neither hath the eye seen, 0 God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him.'

And we have beard His charge to wait for the Promise. We thank Thee for what has already been fulfilled to us of it. But our souls long for the full possession, the fulness of the blessing of Christ. Blessed Father! teach us to wait on Thee, daily watching at the posts of Thy doors.

Teach us each day, as we draw near to Thee, to wait for Him. In the sacrifice of our own wisdom and our will, in holy fear of the workings of our own nature, may we learn to lie in the dust before Thee, that Thy Spirit may work with power. Oh, teach us that as the life of self is laid low before Thee day by day, the Holy Life, that flows from under the Throne, will rise in power, and our worship be in Spirit and in Truth. Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 14

The Spirit of Power

Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be my witnesses.'--Acts 1: 5, 8.

'Tarry ye in the city, till ye be clothed with power from on high.'-LUKE 24: 49.

The disciples had heard from John of the Baptism of the Spirit. Jesus had spoken to them of the Father's giving of the Spirit to those that ask Him, and of the Spirit of their Father speaking in them. And on the last night he had spoken of the Spirit dwelling in them, witnessing with them, having come to them to convince the world. All these thoughts of what this coming of the Holy Spirit would be were thus connected in their mind with the work they would have to do and the power for it. When our Lord gathered up all His teaching in the promise, 'Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and shall be my witnesses,' it must have been to them the simple summing up of what they looked for: a new Divine power for the new Divine work of being the witnesses of a Crucified and Risen Jesus.

This was in perfect harmony with all they had seen in Holy Scripture of the Spirit's work. In the days before the flood He had been striving with men. In the ministry of Moses He fitted him, and the seventy who received of his Spirit, for the work of ruling and guiding Israel, and gave wisdom to those who built God's house. In the days of the Judges He gave the power to fight and conquer the enemies. In the times of Kings and Prophets He gave boldness to testify against sin, and power to proclaim a coming redemption. Every mention of the Spirit in the Old Testament is connected with the honour and Kingdom of God, and the fitting for service in it. In the great prophecy of the Messiah, with which the Son of God opened His ministry at Nazareth, His being anointed with the Spirit had the one object of bringing deliverance to the captives and gladness to the mourners. To the mind of the disciples, as students of the Old Testament and followers of Christ Jesus, the promise of the Spirit could have but one meaning--fitness for the great work they had to do for their Lord when He ascended the Throne. All that the Spirit would be to them personally in His work of comforting and teaching, sanctifying the soul and glorifying Jesus, were but as a means to an end--their induement with power for the service of their departed Lord.

Would God that the Church of Christ understood this in our days ! All prayer for the guiding and gladdening influence of the Holy Spirit in the children of God ought to have this as its aim: fitness to witness for Christ and do effective service in conquering the world for Him. Waste of power is always cause of regret to those who witness it. The economy of power is one of the great moving springs in all organization and industry. The Spirit is the great power of God; the Holy Spirit the great power of God's Redemption, as it comes down from the Throne of Him to whom all power has been given. And can we imagine that God would waste this power on those who seek it only for their own sake, with the desire of being beautifully holy, or wise, or good? Truly no. The Holy Spirit is the power from on high for carrying on the work for which Jesus sacrificed His Throne and His Life. The essential condition for receiving that power is that, we be found ready and fit for doing the work the Spirit has come to accomplish.

'My Witnesses:' these two words do indeed contain, in Divine and inexhaustible wealth of meaning, the most perfect description of the Spirit's Work and our work; the work for which nothing less than His Divine power is needed, the work for which our weakness is just fitted. There is nothing so effective as an honest witness. The learned eloquence of an advocate must give way to it. There is nothing so simple: just telling what we have seen and heard, or, perhaps in silence, witnessing to what has been done in us. It was the great work of Jesus Himself: 'To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the Truth.' And yet, simple and easy as it appears, to make us witnesses of Jesus is what the Almighty power of the Spirit is needed for, and what He was sent to work. If we are, in the power of the eternal life, the power of the world to come, in heavenly power, to witness of Jesus as He reigns in heaven, we need nothing less than the Divine power of the heavenly life to animate the testimony of our lips and life.

The Holy Spirit makes us witnesses because He Himself is a witness. 'He shall witness of me,' Jesus said. When Peter, on the day of Pentecost, preached that Christ, when He had ascended into heaven, had received from 'the Father the Holy Ghost, and had poured Him forth, he spake of what he knew: the Holy Ghost witnessed to him, and in him, of the glory of his exalted Lord. It was this witness of the Spirit to the reality of Christ's power and presence that made him so bold and strong to speak before the council: 'God did exalt Him to be a Prince and a Saviour; and we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Ghost.' It is as the Holy Spirit becomes to us, in a Divine life and power, the witness to what Jesus is at the present moment in His glory, that our witness will be in His power. We may know all that the Gospels record and all that Scripture further teaches of the person and work of Jesus; we may even speak from past experience of what we once knew of the power of Jesus : this is not the witness of power that is promised here, and that will have effect in the world. It is the Presence of the Spirit at the present moment, witnessing to the Presence of the personal Jesus, that gives our witness that breath of life from heaven that makes it mighty through God to the casting down of strongholds. You can truly witness to just as much of Jesus as the Holy Spirit is witnessing to you in life and truth.

The baptism of power, the induement of power, is sometimes spoken of and sought after as a special gift. If Paul asked very distinctly for the Ephesians who had been sealed with the Holy Spirit, that the Father would still give them 'the Spirit of wisdom' (Eph. 1:17), we cannot be far wrong in praying as definitely for 'the Spirit of power.' He who searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, and will give not according to the correctness of our words, but the Spiritbreathed desire of our hearts. Or let us take that other prayer of Paul (Eph.3:16), and plead that ' He would grant us to be mightily strengthened by His Spirit.' However we formulate our prayer, one thing is certain: it is in unceasing prayer, it is in bowing our knees, it is in waiting on God, that from Himself will come what we ask, be it the Spirit of Power or the Power of the Spirit. The Spirit is never anything separate from God; in all His going out and working He still ever is the inmost self of God; it is God Himself who, according to the riches of His glory, is mighty to do above what we ask or think who will in Christ give us to be clothed with the power of the Spirit.

In seeking for this Power of the Spirit, let us note the mode of His working. There is one mistake we must specially beware of.It is that of expecting always to feel the power when it works. Scripture links power and weakness in a wonderful way, not as succeeding each other, but as existing together. 'I was with you in weakness ; my preaching was in power.' 'When I am weak, then am I strong.' (See 1 Cor.2: 3-5 ; 2 Cor. 4:7, 16, 6: 10, 7:10, 13: 3, 4.) The power is the power of God, given to faith; and faith grows strong in the dark. The Holy Spirit hides Himself in the weak things that God hath chosen, that flesh may not glory in His presence. Spiritual power can only be known by the Spirit of faith.The more distinctly we feel and confess our weakness and believe in the power dwelling within us, ready to work as need arises, the more confidently may we expect its Divine operation even when nothing is felt. Christians lose much not only by not waiting for the power, but by waiting in the

wrong way. Seek to combine the faithful and ready obedience to every call of duty, however little thy power appears to be, with a deep, dependent waiting and expectation of Power from on high. 'Let thy intervals of repose and communion be the exercise of prayer and faith in the Power of God dwelling in thee, and waiting to work through thee; thy time exertion and effort will bring the 'proof that by faith out of weakness we are made strong.

Let us also see and make no mistake about the condition of the working of this Divine Power. He that would command nature must first, and most absolutely obey her. It does not need much grace to long and ask for power, even the power of the Spirit. Who would not be glad to have power? Man pray earnestly for power in or with their work, and receive it not, because they do not accept the only posture in which the Power can work. We want to get possession of the Power and use it. God wants the Power to get possession of us, and use us. If we give up ourselves to the Power to rule in us, the Power will give itself to us, to rule through us. Unconditional submission and obedience to the Power in our inner life is the one condition of our being clothed with it. God gives the Spirit to the obedient. 'Power belongeth unto God' and remains His for ever. If thou wouldst have His power work in thee, bow very low in reverence before the Holy Presence that dwelleth in thee, that asks thy surrender to His guidance even in the least things. Walk very humbly in holy fear, lest in anything thou shouldest fail in knowing or doing His holy will. Live as one given up to a Power that has the entire mastery over thee, that has complete possession of thy inmost being. Let the Spirit and His Power have possession of thee: thou shalt know that His power worketh in thee.

Let us be clear, too, as to the object of this power, the work it is to do. Men are very careful to economize power, and to gather it there where it can do its work most effectually. God does not give this power for our own enjoyment,--as little to save us from trouble and effort. He gives it for one purpose, to glorify His Son. Those who in their weakness are faithful to this one object, who in obedience and testimony prove to God that they are ready at any cost to glorify God,-they will receive the power from on high. God seeks for men and women whom He can thus clothe with power. The Church is looking round for them on every side, wondering at the feebleness of so much of its ministry and worship. The world waits for it, to be convinced that God is indeed in the midst of His people. The perishing millions are crying for deliverance, and the Power of God is waiting to work it. Let us not be content with the prayer for God to visit and to bless them, or with the effort to do the best we can for them. Let us give up ourselves, each individual believer, wholly and undividedly, to live as witnesses for Jesus. Let us plead with God to show His people what it means that they are Christ's representatives just as He was the Father's. Let us live in the faith that the Spirit of power is within us, and that the Father will, as we wait on Him, fill us with the power of the Spirit.

Most Blessed Father! we thank Thee for the wonderful provision Thou hast made for Thy children,-that out of weakness they should be made strong, and that just in their feebleness Thy Might Power should be glorified . We thank Thee for the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of Power, coming down to make Jesus, to whom all Power is given, present with His Church, and to make His disciples the witnesses of that Presence.

I ask Thee, 0 my Father, to teach me that I have the power, as I have the Living Jesus. May I not look for it to come with observation. May I consent that it shall ever be a Divine strength in human weakness, so that the glory may be Thine alone. May I learn to receive it in a faith that allows the Mighty Lord Jesus to hold the power and do the work in the midst of weakness. And may, by the Holy Spirit, He be so present with me, that my witness may be of Him alone.

0 my Father! I desire to submit my whole being to this Holy Power. I would bow before its rule every day and all the day. I would be its servant, and humble myself to do its meanest command. Father I let the Power rule in me, that I may be made meet for it to use. And may my one object in life be that Thy Blessed Son may receive the

honour and the glory. Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 15

The Outpouring of the Spirit.

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak, as the Spirit gave them utterance.'-Acts 1:1-4.

In the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the work of Christ culminates. The adorable mystery of the Incarnation in Bethlehem, the great Redemption accomplished on Calvary, the revelation of Christ as the Son of God in the power of the Eternal Life by the Resurrection, His entrance into glory in the Ascension--these are all preliminary stages; their goal and their crown was the coming down of the Holy Spirit. As Pentecost is the last, it is the greatest of the Christian feasts ; in it the others find their realization and their fulfilment. It is because the Church has hardly acknowledged this, and has not seen that the glory of Pentecost is the highest glory of the Father and the Son, that the Holy Spirit has not yet been able to reveal and glorify the Son in her as He fain would. Let us see if we can realize what Pentecost means.

God made man in His own image, and for His likeness, with the distinct object that he should become like Himself. Man was to be a temple for God to dwell in ; he was to become the home in which God could rest. The closest and most intimate union, the indwelling of Love in love : this was what the Holy One longed for, and looked forward to. What was very feebly set forth in type in the temple in Israel became a Divine reality in Jesus of Nazareth: God had found a man in whom He could rest, whose whole being was opened to the rule of His will and the fellowship of His love. In Him there was a human nature, possessed by the Divine Spirit; and such God would have had all men to be. And such all would be, who accepted of this Jesus and His Spirit as their life. His death was to remove the curse and power of sin, and make it possible for them to receive His Spirit. His resurrection was the entrance of human nature, free from all the weakness of the flesh, into the life of Deity, the Divine Spirit-life. His ascension was admittance as Man into the very glory of God; the participation by human nature of perfect fellowship with God in glory in the unity of the Spirit. And yet, with all this, the work was not yet complete. Something, the chief thing, was still wanting. How could the Father dwell in men even as He had dwelt in Christ ? This was the great question to which Pentecost gives the answer.

Out of the depths of Godhead, the Holy Spirit is sent forth in a new character and a new power, such as He never had before. In creation and nature He came forth from God as the Spirit of Life. In the creation of man specially He acted as the power in which his god-likeness was grounded, and which, even after his fall, still testified for God. In Israel He appeared as the Spirit of the theocracy, distinctly inspiring and fitting certain men for their work. In Jesus Christ He came as the Spirit of the Father,given to Him without measure, and abiding in Him. All these are manifestations, in different degrees, of one and the same Spirit. But now there comes the last, the long-promised, an entirely new manifestation of the Divine Spirit. The Spirit that has dwelt in Jesus Christ, and, in His life of obedience, has taken up His human spirit into perfect fellowship and unity with Himself, is now the Spirit of the exalted God-man. As the Man Christ Jesus enters the glory of God and the full fellowship of that Spirit-life in which God dwells, He receives from the Father the right to send forth this Spirit into His disciples, yea, in the Spirit to descend Himself, and dwell in them. In a new power, which hitherto had not been possible, because

Jesus had not been crucified or glorified, as the very Spirit of the crucified and now glorified Jesus, the Spirit comes. The work of the Son, the longing of the Father, receives its fulfilment. Man's heart is now indeed the home of his God.

Said I not truly that Pentecost is the greatest of the Church's feasts ? The mystery of Bethlehem is indeed incomprehensible and glorious, but when once I believe it, there is nothing that does not appear possible and becoming. That a pure, holy body should be formed for the Son of God by the power of the Holy Spirit, and that in that body the Spirit should dwell, is indeed a miracle of Divine Power. But that the same Spirit should now come and dwell in the bodies of sinful men, that in them too the Father should take up His abode, this is a mystery of grace that passeth all understanding. But this, glory be to God! is the blessing Pentecost brings and secures. The entrance of the Son of God into our flesh in Bethlehem, His entrance into the curse and death of sin as our Surety, His entrance in human nature as First-begotten from the dead into the Power of the Eternal Life, His entrance into the very Glory of the Father--these were but the preparatory steps: here is the consummation for which all the rest was accomplished. The word now begins to be fulfilled: 'Behold! the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them."

It is only in the light of all that preceded Pentecost, of all the mighty sacrifice which God thought not too great if He might dwell with sinful men, that the narrative of the outpouring of the Spirit can be understood. It is the earthly reflection of Christ's exaltation in heaven; the participation He gives to His friends of the glory He now has with the Father. To be apprehended aright, it needs a spiritual vision; in the story that is so simply told the deepest mysteries of the Kingdom are unfolded, and the title-deeds given to the Church of her holy heritage until her Lord's return. What the Spirit is to be to believers and the Church, to the ministers of the word and their work, and to the unbelieving world, are the three chief thoughts.

1. Christ had promised to His disciples that in the Comforter He Himself would again come to them. During his life on earth, His personal manifested Presence, as revealing the unseen Father, was the Father's great gift to men, was the one thing the disciples wished and needed. This was to be their portion now in greater power than before. Christ had entered the glory with this very purpose, that now, in a Divine way, 'He might fill all things,' He might specially fill the members of His body with Himself and His glory-life. When the Holy Spirit came down, He brought as a personal Life within them what had previously only been a Life near them, but yet outside their own. The very Spirit of God's own Son, as He had lived and loved, had obeyed and died, had been raised and glorified by Almighty power, was now to become their personal life. The wondrous transaction that had taken place in heaven in the placing of their Friend and Lord on the throne of heaven, this the Holy Spirit came to be the witness of, yea, to communicate and maintain it within them as a heavenly reality. It is indeed no wonder that, as the Holy Ghost comes down from the Father through the glorified Son, their whole nature is filled to overflowing with the joy and power of heaven, with the presence of Jesus, and their lips overflow with the praise of the wonderful works of God.

Such was the birth of the Church of Christ; such must be its growth and strength. The first and essential element of the true succession of the Pentecostal Church is a membership baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, every heart filled with: the experience of the Presence of the glorified Lord, every tongue and life witnessing to the wonderful work God had done, in raising Jesus to the glory of His Throne, and then filling His disciples with that glory too. It is not so much the Baptism of Power for our preachers we must seek; it is that every individual member of Christ's body may know, and possess, and witness to, the Presence of an indwelling Christ through the Holy Spirit. It is this will draw the attention of the world, and compel the confession to the Power of Jesus.

2. It was amid the interest and the questionings which the sight of this joyous praising company of believers

awakened in the multitude that Peter stood up to preach. The story of Pentecost teaches us the true position of the ministry and the secret of its power. A church full of the, Holy Ghost is a power of God to awaken the careless, and attract all honest, earnest hearts. It is to such an audience, roused by the testimony of believers, that the preaching will come with power. It is out of such a church of men and women full of the Holy Ghost that Spirit-led preachers will rise up, bold and free, to point to every believer as a living witness to the truth of their preaching and the Power of their Lord.

Peter's preaching is a most remarkable lesson of what all Holy Ghost preaching will be. He preaches Christ from the Scriptures. In contrast with the thoughts of man, who had rejected Christ, He sets forth the thoughts of God, who had sent Christ, who delighted in Him, and had now exalted Him at His right hand. All preaching in the power of the Holy Spirit will be thus. The Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of His personal life, taking possession of our personality, and witnessing with our spirit to what Christ has won for us. The Spirit has come for the very purpose of continuing the work Christ had begun on earth, of making men partakers of His redemption and His life. It could not be otherwise; the Spirit always witnesses to Christ. He did so in the Scriptures; He does so in the believer; the believer's testimony will ever be according to Scripture. The Spirit in Christ, the Spirit in Scripture, the Spirit in the Church; as long as this threefold cord is kept intertwined, it cannot be broken.

3. The effect of this preaching was marvellous, but not more marvellous than might be expected. The Presence and Power of Jesus are such a reality in the company of disciples; the Power from on High, from the Throne, so fills Peter; the sight and experience he has of Christ, as exalted at the right hand of God, is such a spiritual reality; that power goes out from him, and as his preaching reaches its application: 'Know assuredly that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified,' thousands bow in brokenness of spirit , ready -to acknowledge the Crucified One as their Lord. The Spirit has come to the disciples, and through them convinces the world of unbelief. The penitent inquirers listen to the command to repent and believe, and they, too, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. The greater works Christ had promised to do through the disciples He has done. In one moment lifelong prejudice, and even bitter hatred, give way to surrender, and love, and adoration; from the glorified Lord power has filled his body, and from its power hath gone forth to conquer and to save.

Pentecost is the glorious sunrise of 'that day,' the first of 'those days' of which the prophets and our Lord had so often spoken, the promise and the pledge of what the history of the Church was meant to be. It is universally admitted that the Church has but ill fulfilled her destiny, that even now, after eighteen centuries, she has not risen to the height of her glorious privilege. Even when she strives to accept her calling, to witness for her Lord unto the ends of the earth, she does it too little in the faith of the Pentecostal Spirit, and the possession of His Mighty Power. Instead of regarding Pentecost as sunrise, she too often speaks and acts as if it had been noonday, from which the light must needs begin to wane. Let the Church return to Pentecost, and Pentecost will return to her.The Spirit of God cannot take possession of believers beyond their capacity of receiving Him. The promise is waiting; the Spirit is now in all His fulness. Our capacity of reception needs enlargement. It is at the footstool of the throne, while believers continue with one accord in praise and love and prayer, while delay only intensifies the spirit of waiting and expectation, while faith holds fast the promise, and gazes up on the exalted

Lord, in the confidence that He will make Himself known in power in the midst of His people,--it is at the footstool of the throne that Pentecost comes. Jesus Christ is still Lord of all, crowned with power and glory. His longing to reveal His presence in His disciples, and to make them share the glory life in which He dwells, is as fresh and full as when He first ascended the throne. Let us take our place at the footstool. Let us yield ourselves in strong, expectant faith, to be filled with the Holy Ghost, and to testify for Jesus. Let the indwelling Christ be our life, and our strength, and our testimony. Out of such a Church Spirit-filled preachers will rise, and the power go

forth that will make Christ's enemies bow at His feet.

0 Lord God! we worship before the Throne on which the Son is seated with Thee, crowned with glory and honour. We thank and bless Thee that it is for us, the children of men, that Thou hast done this, and that He in whom Thou delightest belongs as much to earth as to heaven, to us as to Thee. 0 God! we adore Thy love: we praise Thy Holy Name.

We beseech Thee, 0 our Father, to reveal to Thy Church how our Blessed Head counts us as His own body, sharing with Him in His life, His power, and His glory, and how the Holy Spirit, is the bearer of that life and power and glory, is waiting to reveal it within us. Oh, that Thy people might awake to know what the Holy Spirit means, as the real Presence within them of the glorified Lord, and as the clothing with Power from on high for their work on earth. Oh that all Thy people might learn to gaze on their exalted King until their whole being were opened up for His reception, and His Spirit fill them to their, utmost capacity!

Our Father, we plead with Thee, in the name of Jesus, revive Thy Church. Make every believer to be indeed a temple full of the Holy Ghost: Make every church, in its believing members, a consecrated company ever testifying of a present Christ, ever waiting for the fulness of the power from on high. Make every preacher of the word a minister of the Spirit. And let throughout the earth Pentecost be the sign that Jesus reigns, that His redeemed are His body, that His Spirit works, and that every knee shall bow to Him. Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 16

The Holy Spirit and Missions

Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers, And as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. Then, when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, went down to Seleucia.'--Acts 13: 1-4.

It has been rightly said that the Acts of the Apostles might well have borne the name, The Acts of the Exalted Lord, or, The Acts of the Holy Spirit. Christ's parting promise, 'Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be my witnesses, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth,' was indeed one of those Divine seed - words in which is contained the Kingdom of heaven in the power of an infinite growth, with the law of its manifestation, and the prophecy of its final perfection. In the Book of the Acts we have the way traced in which the promise received its incipient fulfilment, on its way from Jerusalem to Rome. It gives us the Divine record of the coming and dwelling and working of the Holy Spirit, as the Power given to Christ's disciples, to witness for Him before Jews and heathens, and of the triumph of the name of Christ in Antioch and Rome as the centres for the conquest of the uttermost parts of the earth. The book reveals, as with a light from heaven, that the one aim and purpose of the descent of the Spirit from our glorified Lord in heaven to His disciples, revealing in them His presence, His guidance, and His Power, is to fit them to be His witnesses even to the uttermost parts of the earth. Missions to the heathen are the one object of the Mission of the Spirit.

In the passage we have as our text we have the first record of the part the Church is definitely called to take in the work of missions. In the preaching of Philip at Samaria, and Peter at Caesarea, - we have the case of individual men exercising their function of ministry among those who were not of the Jews under the leading of the Spirit. In the preaching of the men of Cyprus and Cyrene to the Greeks at Antioch we have the Divine instinct of the Spirit of love and life, leading men to open new paths where the leaders of the Church had not yet thought of coming. But this guidance of the Spirit in separating special men was now to become part of the organization of the Church, and the whole community of believers is to be educated to take its share in the work for which the Spirit specially had come down to earth. If the second of Acts is of importance as giving us the induement of the Church for her Jerusalem or home mission work, the thirteenth is of no less interest as her setting apart for definite foreign mission work. We cannot sufficiently praise God for the deepening interest in missions in our days. If our interest is to be permanent and personal, if it is to be a personal enthusiasm of love and devotion to our Blessed Lord and the lost He came to save, if it is to be fruitful in raising the work of the Church to the true level of Pentecostal Power, we must learn well the lesson of Antioch. Mission work must find its initiative and its power in the distinct and direct acknowledgment of the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

It has often been remarked that true mission work has always been born of a revival of religious life in the Church. The Holy Spirit's quickening work stirs up to new devotion to the Blessed Lord whom He reveals, and to the lost to whom He belongs. It is in such a state of mind that the voice of the Spirit is heard, urging the Lord's

redeemed to work for Him. It was thus at Antioch. There were certain prophets and teachers at Antioch, spending part of their time in ministering to the Lord and fasting. With the public service of God in the Church they combined the spirit of separation from the world and of self-sacrifice. Their Lord was in heaven; they felt the need of close and continued intercourse, waiting for His orders; they understood that the Spirit that dwelt in them could not have free and full scope for action except as they maintained direct fellowship with Him as their Master, and entered as much as possible into the fellowship of Christ's crucifixion of the flesh. 'They ministered to the Lord and fasted: such were the men, such was their state of mind and their habit of life, when the Holy Spirit revealed to them that He had chosen two of their number to a special work, and called upon them to be His instruments in separating them, in presence of the whole Church, for that work.

The law of the Kingdom has not been changed. It is still the Holy Ghost who has charge of all mission work. He will still reveal His will, in the appointment of work and selection of men, to those who are waiting on their Lord in service and separation. When once the Holy Spirit in any age has taught men of faith and prayer to undertake His work, it is easy for others to admire and approve what they do, to see the harmony of their conduct with Scripture, and to copy their example. And yet the real power of the Spirit's guiding and working, the real personal love and devotion to Jesus as a Beloved Lord, may be present in but a very small degree. It is because a great deal of interest in the missionary cause is of this nature, that there has to be so much arguing and begging and pleading on lower grounds with its supporters. The command of the Lord is known as recorded in a book; the living voice of the Spirit, who reveals the Lord in Living Presence and Power, is not heard.

'It is not enough that Christians be stirred and urged to take a greater interest in the work, to pray and give more: there is a more urgent need. In the life of the individual the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the Presence and Rule of the Lord of Glory which He maintains, must again become the chief mark of the Christian life. In the fellowship of the Church, we must learn to wait more earnestly for the Holy Spirit's guidance in the selection of men and fields of labour, in the wakening of interest and the seeking of support : it is in the mission directly originated in much prayer and waiting on the Spirit that His power can specially be expected.

Let no one fear, when we speak thus, that we shall lead Christians away from the real practical work that must be done. There is much that needs to be done, and cannot be done without diligent labour. Information must be circulated; readers must be found and kept; funds must be raised; prayer-meetings must be kept up; directors must meet, and consult, and decide. All this must be done. But it will be done well, and as a service well-pleasing to the Master, just in the measure in which it is done in the power of the Holy Spirit. Oh that the Church, and every member of it, might learn the lesson! The Spirit has come down from heaven to be the Spirit of Missions, to inspire and empower Christ's disciples to witness for Him to the uttermost parts of the earth.

The origin, the progress, the success of missions are all his. It is He who wakens in the hearts of believers the jealousy for the honour of their Lord, the compassion to the souls of the perishing, the faith in His promise, the willing obedience to His commands, in which the mission takes its rise. It is He who draws together to united effort, who calls forth the suitable men to go out, who opens the door, and prepares the hearts of the heathen to desire or to receive the word. And it is He who at length gives the increase, and, even where Satan's seat is, establishes the cross, and gathers round it the redeemed of the Lord. Missions are the special work of the Holy Spirit. No one may expect to be filled with the Spirit if he is not willing to be used for missions. No one who wishes to work or pray for missions need fear his feebleness or poverty: the Holy Spirit is the power that can fit him to take his divinelyappointed place in the work. Let every one who prays for missions, and longs for more of a missionary spirit in the Church, pray first and most that in every believer personally, and in the Church and all its work and worship, the power of the Indwelling Spirit may have full sway.

'Then when they had fasted and prayed, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, went down to Seleucia.' The sending forth was equally the work of the Church and of the Spirit. This is the normal relation. There are men sent forth by the Holy Spirit alone; amid the opposition or indifference of the Church, the Spirit does His work. There are men sent forth by the Church alone ; it thinks the work ought to be done, and does it, but with little of the fasting and praying that recognises the need of the Spirit, and refuses to work without Him. Blessed the Church and blessed the mission which the Spirit originates, where He is allowed to guide, and where the blessing is waited for from Himself alone. Ten days' praying and waiting on earth, and the Spirit's descent in fire: this was the birth of the Church at Jerusalem. Ministering and fasting, and then again fasting and praying, and the Spirit sending forth Barnabas and. Saul: this was at Antioch the consecration of the Church to be a Mission Church. In waiting and prayer on earth, and then in the power of the Spirit from the Lord in heaven, is the strength, the joy, the blessing of the Church of Christ and its missions.

May I say to any missionary who reads this in his far-off home, Be of good cheer, brother ,The Holy Spirit who is the Mighty Power of God, ,who is the Presence of Jesus within thee, the Holy Spirit is with thee, is in thee. The work is His depend on Him, yield to Him, wait for Him; the work is His, He will do it. May I say to every Christian, be he director, supporter, contributor, helper in prayer or in any other way,in the great work of hastening the coming of the Kingdom.

Brother! be of good cheer. From that time of waiting before the Throne, and that baptism there received, the first disciples went forth until they reached Antioch. There they paused, and prayed, and fasted, and then passed on over to Rome and the region beyond. Let us from these our brethren learn the secret of power. Let us call on every Christian who would be a mission friend and mission worker to come with us and be filled with the Spirit whose is the work of missions. Let us lift up a clear testimony that the need of the Church and the world is, believers who can testify to an indwelling Christ in the Spirit, and prove it too. Let us gather such together in the antechamber of the King's Presence, the waiting at Jerusalem, the ministering and fasting at Antioch; the Spirit does still come as of old in power, He does still move and send forth; He is still mighty to convince of sin and reveal Jesus, and to make thousands fall at His feet. He waits for us: let us wait on Him, let us welcome Him

0 God! Thou didst send Thy Son to be the Saviour of the world. Thou didst give Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. And Thou didst pour out Thy Spirit upon all flesh, commissioning as many as received Him to make known and pass on the wondrous blessing. In the Love and Power in which Thy Spirit was sent forth, He likewise sends forth those who yield- themselves to Him, to be the instruments of His Power in glorifying Thy Son. We bless Thee for this Divine and most glorious salvation.

0 our God! we stand amazed, and abased, at the sloth and, neglect of Thy Church in not fulfilling her Divine commission; we are humbled at our slowness of heart to perceive and believe what Thy Son did promise, to obey His will and finish His work. We cry to Thee, our God! visit Thy Church, and let Thy Spirit, the Spirit of the Divine Sending forth, fill all her children.

0 my Father! I dedicate myself afresh to Thee, to live and labour, to pray and travail, to sacrifice and suffer for Thy Kingdom. I accept anew in faith the wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit, the very Spirit of Christ, and yield myself to His indwelling. I humbly plead with Thee, give me and all Thy children to be so mightily strengthened by the Holy Spirit that Christ may possess heart and life, and our one desire be that the whole earth may be filled with His glory. Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 17

The Newness of the Spirit.

But now we have been discharged from the law, having died, to that wherein we were holden; so that we serve in newness of the Spirit, and not in oldness of the letter.'-Rom. 7:6.

If ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.'-Gal. 5:18

THE work of the indwelling Spirit is to glorify Christ and reveal Him within us. Corresponding to Christ's threefold office of Prophet, Priest, and King, we find that the work of the Indwelling Spirit in the believer is set before us in three aspects, as Enlightening, Sanctifying, and Strengthening. 'Of the Enlightening it is that Christ specially speaks in His farewell discourse, when He promises Him as the Spirit of Truth, who will bear witness of Him, will guide into all Truth, will take of Christ's and declare it unto us. In the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians His work as Sanctifying is especially prominent: this was what was needed in Churches just brought out of the depths of heathenism. In the Epistles to the Corinthians, where wisdom was so sought and prized, the two aspects are combined; they are taught that the Spirit can only enlighten as He sanctifies (1 Cor.2 , 3:1-3, 16 ; 2 Cor. 3). In the Acts of the Apostles, as we might expect, His Strengthening for work is in the foreground; as the promised Spirit of Power He fits for a bold and blessed testimony in the midst of persecution and difficulty.

In the Epistle to the Church at Rome, the capital of the world, Paul was called of God to give a full and systematic exposition of His gospel and the scheme of redemption. In this the work of the Holy Spirit must needs have an important place. In giving his text or theme (Rom 1: 17), 'The righteous shall live by faith,' he paves the way for what he was to expound, that through Faith both Righteousness and Life would come. In the first part of his argument, to v. 11, he teaches what the Righteousness of faith is. He then proceeds (v. 12-21) to prove how this Righteousness, is rooted in our living connection with the second Adam, and in a justification of Life. In the individual (6: 1-13) this Life comes through the believing acceptance of Christ's death to sin and His life to God as ours, and the willing surrender (6: 14-23) to be servants of God and of righteousness. Proceeding to show that in Christ we are not only dead to sin, but to the law too as the strength of sin, be comes naturally to the new law which His gospel brings to take the place of the old, the law of the Spirit Of life in Christ Jesus.

We all know how an impression is heightened by the force of contrast. Just as the apostle had contrasted (6: 13-23) the service of sin and of righteousness, so he here (7: 4) contrasts, to bring out fully what the power and work of the Spirit is, the service in the oldness of the letter, in bondage to the law, with the service in newness of the Spirit, in the liberty and power which Jesus through the Spirit gives. In the following passage, Rom. vii. 14-25, and Rom. 8:1-16, we have the contrast worked out; it is in the light of that contrast alone that the two states can be rightly understood. Each state has its key-word, indicating the character of the life it describes. In Rom. 7 we have the word Law twenty times, and the word Spirit only once. In Rom. 8, on the contrary, we find in its first sixteen verses the word Spirit sixteen times. The contrast is between the Christian life in its two possible states, in the law and in the Spirit. Paul had very boldly said, not only, You are dead to sin and made free from sin that you might become servants to righteousness and to God (Rom.6), but also, 'We were made dead to the law, so that, having

died to that wherein we were holden, we serve in newness of spirit, and not in, oldness of the letter.' We have here, then, a double advance, on the teaching of Rom. 6. There it was the death to sin and freedom from it, here it is death to the law and freedom from it. There it was newness of life' (Rom. 5: 4), as an objective reality secured to us in Christ; here it is ' newness of spirit' (Rom.7: 6), as a subjective experience made ours by the indwelling of the Spirit. He that would fully know and enjoy the life in the Spirit must know what life in the law is, and how complete the freedom from it with which he is made free by the Spirit.

In the description Paul gives of the life of a believer, who is still held in bondage of the law, and seeks to fulfil it, there are three expressions in which the characteristic marks of that state are summed up. The first is, the word flesh. ' I am carnal (fleshly), sold under sin. In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing' (14, 18). If we want to understand the word carnal, we must refer to Paul's exposition of it in 1 Cor. 3: 1-3. He uses it there of Christians, who, though regenerate, have not yielded themselves to the Spirit entirely, so as to become spiritual.' They have the Spirit, but allow the flesh to prevail. And so there is a difference between Christians, as they bear their name, carnal or spiritual, from the element that is strongest in them. As long as they have the Spirit, but, owing to whatever cause, do not accept fully His mighty deliverance, and so strive in their own strength, they do not and cannot become spiritual. St. Paul here describes the regenerate man, as he is in himself. He lives by the Spirit, but, according to Gal.5: 25, does not walk by the Spirit. He has the new spirit within him, according to Ezek.36:26, but he has not intelligently and practically accepted God's own Spirit to dwell and rule within that spirit, as the life of His life. He is still carnal.

The second expression we find in ver. 18 'To will is present with me, but how to do that which is good, is not.' In every possible variety of expression Paul (7: 15-2 1) attempts to make clear the painful state of utter impotence in which the law, the effort to fulfil it, leaves a man : ' The good which I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I practise.', Willing, but not doing such is the service of God in the oldness of the letter, in the life before Pentecost (see Matt. 26: 41). The renewed spirit of the man has accepted and consented to the will of God ; but the secret of power to do, the Spirit of God, as indwelling, is not yet known. In those, on the contrary, who know what the life in the Spirit is, God works both to will and to do ; the Christian testifies, ' I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me.' But this is only possible through faith and the Holy Spirit. As long as the believer has not consciously been made free from the law with its, 'He that doeth these things shall live through them,' continual failure will attend his efforts to do the will of God. He may even delight in the law of God after the inward man, but the power is wanting.

It is only when he submits to the law of faith, 'He that liveth shall do these things,' because he knows that he has been made free from the law, that he may be joined to another, to the living Jesus, working in him through His Holy Spirit, that he will indeed bring forth fruit unto God (see Rom. 7: 4).

The third expression we must note is in verse 23 'I see a different law in my members, bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members.' This word, captivity, as that other one, sold under sin, suggests the idea of slaves sold into bondage, without the liberty, or the power to do as they will. They point back to what he had said in the commencement of the chapter, that we have been made free from the law; here is evidently one who does not yet know that liberty. And they point forward to what he is to say in chap. 8: 2: 'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.' The freedom with which we have been made free in Christ, as offered to our faith, cannot be fully accepted or experienced as long as there is ought of a legal spirit. It is only by the Spirit of Christ within us that the full liberation is effected. As in the oldness of the letter, so in the newness of the Spirit, a twofold relation exists: the objective or external, the subjective or personal. There is the law over me, and outside of me, and there is the law of sin in my members, deriving its strength from the objective one Just so, in being made free from the law, there is the objective liberty in Christ

offered to -my faith, and there is the subjective personal possession of that liberty, in its fulness and power, to be had alone through the Spirit dwelling and ruling in my members, even as' the law of sin had done. This alone can change the plaint of the captive: 'Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from -the bondage of this death?' into the song of the ransomed: 'I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord,' ' The law of the Spirit made me free.'

And how now have we to regard the two states thus set before us in Rom. 7: 14-23 and via. 1-16? Are they interchangeable, or successive, or simultaneous?

Many have thought that they are a description of the varying experience of the believer's life. As often as, by the grace of God, he is able to do what is good, and to live well -pleasing to God, he experiences the grace of chap. 8, while the consciousness of sin or shortcoming plunges him I again into the wretchedness of chap. 7. Though now the one and then the other experience may be more marked, each day brings the experience of both.

Others have felt that this is is not the life of a believer as God would have it , and as the provision of God's grace has placed it within our reach. And as they saw that a life in the freedom with which, Christ makes free, when the Holy Spirit dwells within us, is within our reach, and as they entered on it, it was to them indeed as if now, for ever they had left the experience of Rom. vii far behind, and they cannot but look upon it as Israel's wilderness life, a life never more to be returned to. And there are many who can testify what light and blessing has come to them as they saw what the blessed transition was from the bondage of the law to the liberty of the Spirit.

And yet, however large the measure of truth in this view, it does not fully satisfy. The believer feels that there is not a day that he gets beyond the words, 'In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.' Even when kept most joyously in the will of God, and strengthened not only to will but also to do, he knows that it is not he, but the grace of God: 'in me dwelleth no good.' And so the believer comes to see that, not the two experiences, but the two states are simultaneous, and, that even when his experience is most fully that of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus making him free, he still bears about with him the body of sin and death.' The making free of the Spirit, and the deliverance from the power of sin, and the song of thanks to God is the continuous experience of' the power of the endless life as maintained by the Spirit of Christ. As I am led of the Spirit, I am not under the law. Its spirit of bondage, its weakness through the flesh, and the sense of condemnation and wretchedness it works, are cast out by the liberty of the Spirit.

If there is one lesson the believer needs to learn, who would enjoy the full indwelling of the Spirit, it is the one taught in this passage with such force: that the law, the flesh, that self-effort are all utterly impotent in enabling us to serve God. It is the Spirit within, taking the place of the law without, that leads us into the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.'

Beloved Lord Jesus! I humbly ask Thee to make clear to me the blessed secret of the life of the Spirit. Teach me what it is that we are become dead to the law, so that our service of God is no longer in the oldness of the letter. And what that we are married to Another, even to Thyself, the Risen One, through whom we bring forth fruit unto God, serving in the newness of the Spirit.

Blessed Lord! with deep shame do I confess the sin of my nature, that 'in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing,' that 'I am carnal, sold under sin.' I do bless Thee, that in answer to the cry, 'Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' Thou hast taught me to answer, 'I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' ' The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death.'

Blessed Master ! teach me now to serve Thee in the newness and the liberty, the ever-fresh gladness of the Spirit of life. Teach me to yield myself in large and wholehearted faith to that Holy Spirit, that my life may indeed be in the glorious liberty of the children of God, in the power of an indwelling Saviour working in me both to will and to do, even as the Father did work in Him. Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 18

The Liberty of the Spirit

The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death. If by the Spirit ye make to die the deeds of the body, ye shall live.'-Rom. 8: 2:13

In the sixth chapter Paul had spoken (vers. 18, 22) of our having been made free from sin in Christ Jesus. Our death to sin in Christ had freed us from its dominion: being made free from sin as a Power, as a Master, when we accepted Christ in faith, we became servants to righteousness and to God. In the seventh chapter (vers. 1-6) he had spoken of our being made free from the law.

'The strength of sin is the law:' deliverance from sin and the law go together. And being made free from the law, we had been united to the living Christ, that, in union with Him, we might now serve in newness of the Spirit (7: 4-6). Paul had, in these two passages (6 and 7: 1-6), presented this being made free from sin and the law, in its objective reality, as a life prepared in

Christ, to be accepted and maintained by faith, According to the law of a gradual growth in the Christian life, the believer has, in the power of the Spirit with which he has been sealed, in faith to enter into this union and to walk in it. As a matter of experience, almost all believers can testify that, even after they have seen and accepted this teaching, their life is not what they had hoped it would be. They have found the descent into the experience of the second half of Rom. 7 most real and painful. It was because there is, as a rule, no other way for learning the two great lessons the believer needs. The one is the deep impotence of the human will, under the law urging it to obedience, ever to work out a Divine righteousness in man's life; the other, the need of the, conscious and most entire indwelling of the Holy Spirit as the only sufficient power for the life of a child of God.

In the first half of Rom. 8 we have the setting forth of this latter truth. In the Divine exposition of the Christian life in this Epistle, as in its growth in the believer,'there is a distinct advance from step to step. The eighth chapter, in introducing the Holy Spirit for the, first time in the unfolding of the life of faith, as we have it in chaps. 6-8, teaches us that it is only as the Spirit definitely animates our life and walk, and as He is distinctly known and accepted to do this, that we can fully possess and enjoy the riches of grace that are ours in Christ. Let every one who would know what it is to be dead to sin and alive to God, to be free from sin and a bondslave unto God, to be freed from the law, and married to Him who is raised from the dead, come hither to find the strength he needs, in that Spirit, through whom the union with Christ can be maintained as a Divine experience, and His life be lived within us in Power and in Truth.

In the first half of this eighth chapter the second verse is the centre. It reveals the wonderful secret of how our freedom from sin and the law may become a living and abiding experience. A believer may know that he is free, and yet have to mourn that his experience is that of a wretched captive. The freedom is so entirely in Christ Jesus, and the maintenance of the living union with Him is so distinctly and entirely a work of Divine power, that it is only as we see that the Divine Spirit 'dwells within us for this very purpose, and know how to accept and yield to

His working it, that we can really stand perfect and complete in the liberty with which Christ hath made us free. The life and the liberty of Rom. 6 and 7:1-6 are only fully ours as we can say, 'The law of the Spirit of the life that is in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death.' Through the whole Christian life the principle rules: 'According to your faith be it unto you.' As the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of faith, reveals the greatness of God's resurrection power working in us, and as faith in the indwelling Spirit submits to receive that power to the full, all that is true for us in Christ Jesus becomes true in our daily personal experience. It is as we perceive the - difference between this and the previous teaching (Rom. 6-7: 6), as we see what a distinct advance it is upon it, the indispensable completion of the wonderful revelation of our life in Christ there made, that the unique and most glorious place which the Holy Spirit as God holds in the scheme of redemption and the life of faith will open up to us. We learn thus, that, as divinely perfect as is the Life of Liberty in Christ Jesus, is also the power of that Life in the Holy Spirit, enabling us to walk in that Liberty. The living assurance and experience of the Holy Spirit's indwelling will become to us the very first necessary of the new Life, inseparable from the Person and Presence of Jesus Christ our Lord.

'The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus made us free from the Law of Sin and Death.' Paul here contrasts the two opposing laws; the one of Sin and Death in the members, the other of the Spirit of Life ruling and quickening even the mortal body. Under the former we have seen the believer sighing as a wretched captive. In the second half of Rom. 6, Paul had addressed him as made free from sin, and by voluntary surrender become a servant to God and to righteousness. He has forsaken the service of sin, and yet it often masters him. The promise, 'Sin shall not'-shall never for a moment-'have dominion over you,' has not been realized. To will is present but how to perform he knows not. '0 wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? is the cry of impotence amid all his efforts to keep the law. 'I thank God, through Christ Jesus our Lord,' is the answer of faith that claims the deliverance in Christ from this power that has held him captive. From the Law, the Dominion of Sin and Death in the members, its actual power in working sin, there is deliverance. That deliverance is a new law, a mightier force, an actual power making free from sin. As real as was the energy of' sin working in our members, and more mighty, is the energy of the Spirit dwelling in our bodies. It is the Spirit of the Life that there is in Christ. Out of that Life, when filled as it was in the resurrection and ascension with the mighty energy of God's power (Eph.1:17, 2 1), and admitted on the throne to the omnipotence of God as the Eternal Spirit-out of that Life there descended the Holy Spirit, Himself God. The Law, the Power, the Dominion of the Life in Christ Jesus, made, me free from the Law, the Dominion of Sin and Death in my members, with a freedom as real as was the slavery. From the very first beginnings of the New Life, it was the Spirit who breathed faith in Christ. On our first entering into justification, it was He who shed abroad the love of God in our hearts. It was He who led us to see Christ as our Life as well as our Righteousness. But all this was in most cases still accompanied with much ignorance of His Presence, of the great need and the supply of His Almighty Power. As the believer in Rom.7:(14-23) is brought to the discovery of the deep-rooted legality of the old nature, and its absolute impotence, the truth of the Holy Spirit, and of the Mighty Power with which He does make practically free from the Power of Sin and Death is understood as never before, and our text becomes the utterance of the highest faith and experience combined: 'The Law of the Spirit of Life made me free from the Law of Sin and Death.' As real, and mighty, and spontaneous as was the Law of Sin in the members, is now the Law of the Spirit of Life in those members too.

The believer who would live fully in this liberty of the Life in Christ Jesus will easily understand what the path is in which he will learn to walk, Rom.8 is the goal to which Rom. 6 and 7 lead up. In faith he will first have to study and accept all that is taught in these two earlier chapters of his being in Christ Jesus; dead to sin and alive to God, made free from sin and enslaved to God, free from the law, and married to Christ. 'If ye abide in my word ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' Let the word of God, as it teaches you your union with Christ, be the life soil in which your faith and life daily roots; abide, dwell in it, and let it abide in you. To meditate, to hold fast, to hide in the heart the word of this gospel, to assimilate it in faith and patience, is the way

to rise and reach each higher truth the Scripture teaches. And if the passage through the experience of carnality and captivity, which the attempts to fulfil the law we delight in bring, appears to be anything but progress, let us remember that it is just in the utter despair of self that the entire surrender to the Spirit, to bring and keep us in the liberty with which Christ makes free, is born and strengthened. To cease from all hope in the flesh and the law, is the entrance into the liberty, of the Spirit.

To walk in the path of this New Life it will further be specially needful to remember what is meant by the expression the word so distinctly uses, a 'walk after the Spirit.' The Spirit is to lead, to decide and show the path. This implies surrender, obedience, a waiting to be guided. He is to be the ruling Power, we are in all things to live and act under the Law, the legislation, the Dominion of the Spirit. A holy fear to grieve Him, a tender watchfulness to know His leading, an habitual faith in His hidden but most sure presence, a lowly adoration of Him as God, must be the mark of such a life. The words which Paul uses towards the close of this section are to express our one aim - 'If ye, through the Spirit, make to die the deeds of the body, ye shall live.' The Holy Spirit possessing, inspiring, animating all the powers of our spirit and soul, entering even: into the body, and, in the power of His Divine life, enabling us to make and keep dead the deeds of the body, this is what we may count upon as the fulfilment of the word, 'The law of the Spirit of the Life in Christ Jesus made, me free from the law of Sin and Death.' This is that salvation in sanctification of the Spirit' to which we have been chosen.

'We walk by faith:' this is what we specially need to remember in regard to a ' walk after the Spirit.' The visible manifestation of Christ to us, and His work, are so much more intelligible than the revelation of the Spirit within us, that it is here, above all, in seeking the leading of the Spirit, that faith is called for. The Almighty Power of the Spirit hides Himself away in such a real union with our weakness, with our personality in its abiding sense of weakness, that it needs patient perseverance in believing and obeying to come into the full consciousness of His indwelling, and of His having indeed undertaken to do all our living for us. It needs the direct fresh anointing day by day from the Holy One, in fellowship with Christ, the Anointed, and in persevering waiting on the Father. Here, if ever, the word is needed, 'Only believe! Believe in the Father and His promise! Believe in the Son and His life as thine: 'Our life is hid with Christ in God.' Believe in the Spirit, as the bearer, and communicator, and maintainer of the Life and Presence of Jesus ! Believe in Him as already within thee! Believe in His power and faithfulness to work, in a way that is Divine and beyond thy conception, His work in thee! Believe, ' The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus made me free from the Law of Sin and Death.' Bow in deep silence of soul before God, waiting on Him to work mightily in thee by His Spirit. As self is laid low, He will do His blessed and beloved work. He will reveal, will impart, will make and keep divinely present Jesus Christ as the Life of thy spirit.

Ever blessed God and Father! we do praise Thee for the wonderful gift of Thy Holy Spirit, in whom 'Thou with Thy, Son comest to make abode in us. We do bless Thee for that wonderful gift of Eternal Life, which Thy beloved Son brought us, and which we have in Jesus Himself, as His own life given to us. And we thank Thee that the Law of the Spirit of the Life in Christ Jesus now makes us free from the Law of Sin and Death.

Our Father! we humbly pray Thee to reveal to us in full and blessed experience what this perfect Law of Liberty is. Teach us how it is the Law of an inner Life, that in joyful and spontaneous power grows up into its blessed destiny. Teach us that the Law is none other than of the Eternal Life, in its power of continuous and unfading being. Teach us that it is the Law of the Life of Christ Jesus, the living Saviour Himself, living and maintaining it in us. Teach us that it is the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, the Holy Spirit revealing and glorifying Christ in us as an indwelling Presence. 0 Father ! open our eyes and strengthen our faith, that we may believe that the Law of the Spirit is indeed mightier than the Law of Sin in our members, and makes free from it, so that through the Spirit we make dead the deeds of the body, and indeed live the life of Christ.

0 Father! teach this to all Thy children. Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 19

The Leading of the Spirit

An many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.'-Rom.8:14.

By very many Christians the leading of the Spirit is chiefly looked for as a suggestion of thoughts for our guidance. In the decision of doubtful questions of opinion or of duty, in the choice of words from Scripture to use, or the distinct direction to the performance of some Christian work, they would be so glad of some intimation from the Spirit of what the right thing is. They long and ask for it in vain. When at times they think they have it, it does not bring the assurance, or the comfort, or the success, which they think ought to be the seal of what is really from the Spirit. And so the precious truth of the Spirit's leading; instead of being an end of all controversy, and the solution of all difficulty, a source of comfort and of strength, itself becomes a cause of perplexity, and the greatest difficulty of all.

The error comes from not accepting the truth we have had to insist upon more than one the teaching and the leading of the Spirit given in the Life, not in the Mind. The Life is stirred and strengthened; the Life becomes the Light. As the ,conformity to this world spirit is crucified and dies, as we deliberate: and keep down the life of nature and the the flesh, we are renewed in the spirit of our mind and so the mind becomes able to prove and know the good and perfect and acceptable will (Rom. 12:2).

This connection between the practical sanctifying work of the Spirit in our inner life, and His comes out very clearly in our context. ` If by the Spirit ye make to die the deeds of the body,ye shall live,' we read in 8:13. Then follows immediately, 'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.' That is, as many as allow they to be led by Him in this mortifying of the a the body, these are the sons of God. Th Spirit is the Spirit of the holy life which the and is in Christ Jesus, and which works in Divine life-power. He is the Spirit of Holin only as such will He lead. Through Him God works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure through Him God makes us perfect in every good work to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight. To be led of the Spirit implies in the first place the surrender to His work as He convinces of sin and cleanses soul and body for His temple. It is as the Indwelling Spirit, filling, sanctifying, and ruling the heart and life, that He enlightens and leads.

In the study of what the leading of the Spirit means, it is of the first importance to grasp this thought in all its bearings. It is only the spiritual mind that can discern spiritual things, and can receive the leadings of the Spirit. The mind must grow spiritual to become capable of spiritual guidance. Paul said to the Corinthians, that because, though born again, they were still carnal, as babes in Christ, he had not been able to teach them spiritual truth.If this holds of the teaching that comes through man, how much more of that direct teaching of the Spirit, by which He leads into all truth. The deepest mysteries of Scripture, as far as they are apprehended by human thought, can be studied and accepted and even taught by the unsanctified mind.But the leading of the Spirit, we cannot repeat it too often, does not begin in the region of thought or feeling. Deeper down, in the life itself, in the hidden laboratory of the inner life, whence issues the power that moulds the will and fashions the character in our spirits,

there the Holy Spirit takes up His abode, there He breathes and moves and impels. He leads by inspiring us with a disposition out of which right purposes and come forth. `That ye may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and understanding:' that prayer teaches us that it is only to a spiritual understanding that the knowledge of God's will can be given. And the spiritual understanding only comes with the growth of the spiritual man, and the faithfulness to the spiritual life. He that would have the leading of Spirit must yield himself to have his life wholly possessed and filled of the Spirit. It was when Christ had been baptized with the Spirit that, `being full of the Spirit, he was led by the Spirit in the wilderness (Luke 4: 1), `that He returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee' (4:14), and began His ministry in Nazareth with the words, ` The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me.'

All leading implies following. It is easily understood that to enjoy the leading of the Spirit demands a very teachable, followsome mind. The Spirit is not only hindered by the flesh as the power that commits sin, but still more by the flesh power that seeks to serve God. To be able to discern the Spirit's teaching, Scripture tells us that the ear must be circumcised, in a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ. The will and wisdom of the flesh must be feared and crucified, and denied. The ear must be closed to all that the flesh and its wisdom, whether in self or in men around us, has to say. In all our thoughts of God or our study of His Word, in all our drawings nigh to worship, and all our goings out to work for Him, there must be a continued distrust and abnegation of self, and a very definite waiting on God by the Holy Spirit to teach and lead us. A soul that thus daily and hourly waits for a Divine leading, for the light of knowledge and of duty, will assuredly receive it. Would you be led of the, Spirit,give up, day by day, not only your will and wisdom, but your whole life and being. The Fire will descend and consume the sacrifice.

This leading of the Spirit must very specially be a thing of faith, and that in two senses. The beginning of the leading will come when we learn in holy fear to cultivate and act upon the confidence the Holy Spirit is in me, and is doing His work.

The Spirit's indwelling is the crowning piece of God's redemption work : the most spiritual and mysterious part of the mystery of godliness. Here,if anywhere, faith is needed. Faith is the faculty of the soul which recognises the Unseen, the Divine; which receives the impression of the Divine Presence when God draws near; which in its measure accepts of what the Divine Being brings and gives to us. In the Holy Spirit is the most intimate communication of the Divine Life; here faith may not judge by what it feels or understands, but simply submits to God to let Him do what He has said. It meditates and worships, it prays and trusts ever afresh, it yields the whole soul in adoring acceptance and thanksgiving to the Saviour's word, ' He shall be in you.' It in the assurance: the Holy Spirit, the Power of God, dwells within; in His own may depend upon it, He will lead me.

And then, with this more general faith indwelling of the Spirit, faith has also exercised in regard to each part of the leading. When there is a question I have laid before the Lord, and my soul has in simplicity and emptiness waited for His exposition and application of what in Word or Providence has met me, I must in faith trust my God that His guidance is not withheld. As we have said before, not in sudden inpulses or strong impressions, not in heavenly voices or in remarkable interpositions, must we expect the ordinary leading of the Spirit. There are souls to whom such leading undoubtedly is given; time may come, as our nature becomes spiritual and lives more in direct contact with the Invisible, that our very thoughts and feeling become the conscious vehicles of His blessed voice. But this we must leave to Him, and the growth of our spiritual capacity. The lower steps of the ladder are let down low enough for the weakest to reach; God means every child of His to be led by the Spirit every day. Begin the path of following the Spirit's leading by believing, not only that the Spirit is within you, but that He, if hitherto you have little sought or enjoyed the wondrous blessing, does now at once undertake the work for which you ask and trust Him. Yield yourself to God in undivided surrender: believe with implicit confidence that God's

acceptance of the surrender means that you are given in charge of the Spirit. Through Him Jesus guides and rules and saves you.

But are we not in danger of being led away by the imaginings of our own hearts, and counting as leading of the Spirit what proves to be a delusion of the flesh ? And if so, where is our safeguard against such error ? The answer ordinarily given to this last question is: The Word of God. And yet that answer is but half the truth. Far too many have opposed to the danger of fanaticism the word of God, as interpreted by human reason or by the Church, and have erred no less than those they sought to oppose. The answer is: The word of God as taught by the Spirit of God. It is in the perfect harmony of the two that our safety is to be found. Let us on the one hand remember, that as all the word of God is given by the Spirit of God, so each word must be interpreted to us by that same Spirit. That this interpretation comes not from the Spirit above us or around us, suggesting thoughts to us, but from the indwelling Spirit, we need hardly repeat; it is only the spiritual man, whose inner life is under the dominion of the Spirit, who can discern,the spiritual meaning of the word. Let us on the other hold fast, that as all the word is given by the Spirit, so His great work is to honour that Word, and to unfold the fulness of Divine truth treasured there. Not in the Spirit without or with but little of the word; not in the word without or with but little of the Spirit; but in the word and Spirit both dwelling richly within us, and both yielded to in implicit obedience, is our assurance of safety in the path of the guidance.

This brings us back to the lesson we urged at the commencement: the leading of the Spirit is inseparable from the sanctifying of the Spirit each one who would be led of the Spirit begin by giving himself to be led-- of the word as far as he knows it. Begin at the beginning: obey the commandments. ` He that will do, shall know, said Jesus. ` Keep my commandments, and the Father will send you the Spirit.' Give up every sin. Give up in everything to the voice of conscience. Give up in everything to God, and let Him have His way. Through the Spirit mortify the deeds the body (v. 13). As a son of God place yourself at the entire disposal of the Spirit, to follow where He leads (v. 14). And the Spirit Himself , this same Spirit, through whom you mortify sin: and yield yourself to be led as a son, will bear witness with your spirit, in a joy and power hitherto unknown, that you are indeed a child of God enjoying all a child's privileges in his Father’s love and guidance.

Blessed Father! I thank Thee for the message that as many as are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. Thou wouldest not have Thy children guided by any one less than Thy own Holy Spirit.As He dwelt in Thy Son, and led Him, so He leads us too with a Divine and most blessed leading.

Father, Thou knowest how by reason of our not rightly knowing and not perfectly following this holy guidance, we are often unable to know His voice, so that the thought of the leading of the Spirit is more a burden than a joy. Father, forgive us. Be pleased graciously so to quicken our faith in the simplicity and certainty of the leading of the Spirit, that with our whole heart we may yield ourselves henceforth to walk in it.

Father, I do here yield myself to Thee as Thy child, in everything to be led of Thy Spirit. My own wisdom, my own will, my own way I forsake. Daily would I wait in deep dependence on a guidance from above. May my spirit ever be hushed in silence before Thy Holy Presence, while I wait to let Him rule within. As I through the Spirit make dead the deeds of the body, may I be transformed by the renewing of my mind to know Thy good and perfect will. May my whole being so be under the rule of the Indwelling, Sanctifying Spirit, that the spiritual understanding of Thy will may indeed be the rule of my life. Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 20

The Spirit of Prayer

In like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity - for we know not how to pray as we ought but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered; and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to God. Rom. 8:26, 27.

Of the offices of the Holy Spirit, one that leads us most deeply into the understanding of His place in the Divine economy of grace, and into the mystery of the Holy Trinity, is the work He does as the Spirit of prayer. We have the Father to whom we pray, and who hears prayer. We have the Son through whom we pray, and through whom, in union with whom, we receive and really appropriate the answer. And we have the Holy Spirit in whom we pray, who prays in us according to the will of God, with such deeply hidden, unutterable sighings, that God has to search the hearts to know what is the mind of the Spirit. Just as wonderful and real as is the Divine work of God on the Throne, graciously hearing, and, by his,-mighty power, effectually answering prayer; just as Divine as is the work of the Son interceding and securing and transmitting the answer from above, is the work of the Holy Spirit in us in the prayer which waits and obtains the answer. The intercession within is as Divine as the intercession above. Let us try and understand why this should be so, and what it teaches.

In the creation of the world we see how it was the work of the Spirit to put Himself into contact with the dark and lifeless matter of chaos, and by His quickening energy to impart to it the power of life and fruitfulness. It was only after it had been thus vitalized by Him, that the Word of God gave it form, and called forth all the different types of life and beauty we now see. So, too, again in the creation of man it was the Spirit that was breathed into the body that had been formed from the ground, and that thus united itself with what would otherwise be dead matter. Even so, in the person of Jesus it is the Spirit through whose work a body was prepared for Him, through whom His body again was quickened from the grave, as it is through Him that our bodies are the temples of God, and the very members of our body the members of Christ. We think of the Spirit in connection with the spiritual nature of the Divine Being, far removed from the grossness and feebleness of matter; we forget that it is the very work of the Spirit specially to unite Himself with what is material, to lift it up into Its own Spirit nature, and so to develop what will be the highest type of perfection, a spiritual body.

This view of the Spirit's work is essential to the understanding of the place He takes in the Divine work of redemption. In each part of that work there is a special place assigned to each of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity. In the Father we have the unseen God, the Author of all. In the Son God revealed, made manifest, and brought nigh, He is the Form of God. In the Spirit of God we have the Indwelling God- the Power of God dwelling in human body and working in it what the Father and the Son have for us. The weakness and humiliation, yea, the very grossness of the flesh is the sphere for the operation of the Holy Spirit. Not only in the individual, but in the Church as a whole, what the Father has purposed, and the Son has procured, can be appropriated and take effect in the members of Christ who are still here in the flesh, only through the continual intervention and active operation of the Holy Spirit.

This is specially true of intercessory prayer. The coming of the kingdom of God, the increase of grace and knowledge and holiness in believers, their growing devotion to God's work and power for that work, the effectual working of God's power on the unconverted through the means of grace,--all this waits to come to us from God through Christ. But it cannot come except as it is looked for and desired, asked and expected, believed and hoped for. And this is now the wonderful position the Holy Ghost occupies, that to Him has been assigned the task of preparing the body of Christ to reach out and receive and hold fast what has been provided in the fulness of Christ the Head. For the communication of the Father's love and blessing, the Son and the Spirit must both work. The Son receives from the Father, reveals and brings nigh, as it were, descends from above; the Spirit from within wakens the soul to come out and meet its Lord. As indispensable as the unceasing intercession of Christ above, asking and receiving from the Father, is the unceasing intercession of the Spirit within, asking and accepting from the Son what the Father gives.

Very wonderful is the light that is cast upon this holy mystery by the words of our text. In the life of faith and prayer there are operations of the Spirit in which the word of God is made clear to our understanding, and our faith knows to express what it needs and asks. But there are also operations of the Spirit, deeper down than thoughts or feelings, where He works desires and yearnings in our spirit, in the secret springs of life and being, which God only can discover and understand. Of this nature is the real thirst for God Himself, the Living God, the longing to know the love 'that passeth knowledge,' and to be 'filled with all the fullness of God,' the hope in 'Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think,' even 'what hath not entered the heart of man to conceive.' When these aspirations indeed take possession of us, we begin to pray for what cannot be expressed, and our only comfort is then that the Spirit prays with His unutterable yearnings in a region and a language which the Heart Searcher alone knows and understands.

To the Corinthians Paul says, ' I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also.' Under the influence of the moving of the Holy Spirit and His miraculous gifts, their danger was to neglect the understanding. Our danger in these latter days is in the opposite direction: to pray with the understanding is easy and universal. We need to be reminded that, with the prayer with the understanding, there must come the prayer with the Spirit, the 'praying in the Holy Spirit' (Jude ver.20; Ephesians 6:18). We need to give its due place to each of the twofold operations of the Spirit. God's Word must dwell in us richly; our faith must seek to hold it clearly and intelligently, and to plead it in prayer. To have the words of Christ abiding in us, filling life and conduct, is one of the secrets of acceptable prayer. And yet we must always remember that in the inner sanctuary of our being, in the region of the unutterable and inconceivable (1 Cor.2:6), the Spirit prays for us what we do not know and cannot express. As we grow in the apprehension of the divinity of that Holy Spirit who dwells within, and the reality of His breathing within us, we shall recognise how infinitely beyond the conceptions of our mind must be that Divine hunger with which He draws us heavenward. We shall feel the need of cultivating not only the activity of faith, which seeks to grasp and obey God's word, and from that to learn to pray, but its deep passivity too. As we pray we shall remember how infinitely above our conception is God and the spirit-world into which by prayer we enter. Let us believe and rejoice that where heart and flesh fail, there God is the strength of our heart, there His Holy Spirit within us in the inmost sanctuary of our spirit, within the veil, does His unceasing work of intercession, and prays according to God within us. As we pray, let us at times worship in holy stillness, and yield ourselves to that Blessed Paraclete, who alone, who truly is, the Spirit of Supplication.'

'Because He maketh intercession for the saints.' Why does the apostle not say for us ; as he had said, 'We know not how to pray as we ought'? The expression, the saints, is a favourite one with Paul, where he thinks of the Church, either in one country or throughout the world. It is the special work of the Spirit, as dwelling in every member, to make the body realize its unity. As selfishness disappears, and the believer becomes more truly spiritual-minded,and he feels himself more identified with the body as a whole, he sees how its health and

prosperity will be his own, and he learns what it is to 'pray at all seasons in the Spirit, watching thereunto in all perseverance for all saints.' It is as we give up ourselves to this work, in a large heartedness which takes in all the Church of God, that the Spirit will have free scope and will delight to do His work of intercession for the saints in us. It is specially in intercessory prayer that we may count upon the deep, unutterable, but all-prevailing intercession of the Spirit.

What a privilege ! to be the temple out of which the Holy Spirit cries to the Father His unceasing Abba! and offers His unutterable intercession, too deep for words. What blessedness! that as the Eternal Son dwelt in the flesh in Jesus of Nazareth, and prayed to the Father as man, that even so the Eternal Spirit should dwell in us, sinful flesh, to train us to speak with the Father even -as the Son did. Who would not yield himself to this blessed Spirit, to be made fit to take a share in that mighty Intercession work through which alone the Kingdom of God can be revealed ? The path is open, and invites all. Let the Holy Spirit have complete possession. Let Him fill you. Let Him be your life. Believe in the possibility of His making your very personality and consciousness the seat of His inbeing. Believe in the certainty of His working, and praying in you in a way that no human mind can apprehend. Believe that in the secrecy and apparent weakness and slowness of that work, His Divine Almighty Power is perfecting the Divine purpose and the Divine Oneness with your blessed Lord. And live as one in whom the things that pass all understanding have become Truth and Life, in whom the Intercession of the Spirit is part of your daily life in Christ.

Most Holy God! once more I bow in lowly adoration in Thy Presence, to thank Thee for the precious privilege of prayer. And specially would I thank Thee for the Grace that has not only given us in Thy Son the Intercessor above, but in Thy Spirit the Intercessor within. 0 my Father! Thou knowest that I can scarce take in the wondrous thought, that Thy Holy Spirit in very deed dwelleth in me, and prays in my feeble prayers. I do beseech Thee, discover to me all that hinders His taking full possession of me, and filling me with the consciousness of His Presence. Let my inmost being and my outer life all be so under His leading, that I may have the spiritual understanding that knows to ask according to Thy will, and the living faith that receives what it asks. And when I know not what or how to pray, 0 Father, teach me to bow in silent worship, and keep waiting before Thee, knowing that He breathes the wordless prayer which Thou alone canst understand.

Blessed God ! I am a temple of the Holy Spirit. I yield myself for Him to use me as the Spirit of Intercession. May my whole heart be so filled with the longing for Christ's honour, and His love for the lost, that my life may become one unutterable cry for the coming of Thy Kingdom. Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 21

The Holy Spirit and Conscience.

'I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.'-Rom. 9:1.

‘The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit.'-Rom 8:16.

God's highest glory is His Holiness in virtue of which He hates and destroys the evil, loves and works the good. In man, conscience has the same work: it condemns sin and approves the right. Conscience is the remains of God's image in man, the nearest approach to the Divine in him, the guardian of God's honour amid the ruin of the fall. As a consequence, God's work of redemption must always begin with conscience. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of His Holiness ; conscience is a spark of the Divine holiness; harmony between the work of the Holy Spirit in, renewing and sanctifying man, and the work of conscience, is most intimate and essential. The believer who would be filled with the Holy Spirit, and experience to the full the blessings He has to give, must in the first place see to it that he yields to conscience the place and the honour which belong to it. Faithfulness to conscience is the first step in the path of restoration to the Holiness of God. Intense conscientiousness will be the groundwork and characteristic of true spirituality. As it is the work of conscience to witness to our being right towards our sense of duty and towards God, and the work of the Spirit to witness to God's acceptance of our faith in Christ and our obedience to Him, the testimony of the Spirit and of conscience will, as the Christian life progresses, become increasingly identical. We shall feel the need and the blessedness of saying with Paul, in regard to all our conduct: 'My conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.'

Conscience can be compared to the window of a room, through which the light of heaven shines into it, and through which we can look out and see that heaven, with all that its light shines on. The heart is the chamber in which our Life dwells, our Ego, or Soul, with its powers and affections. On the walls of that chamber there is written the law of God. Even in the heathen it is still partly legible, though sadly darkened and defaced. 'In the believer the law is written anew by the Holy Spirit, in letters of light, which often at first are but dim, but grow clearer and glow brighter as they are freely exposed to the action of the light without. With every sin I commit, the light that shines in makes it manifest and condemns it. If the sin be not confessed and forsaken, the stain remains, and conscience becomes defiled, because the mind refused the teaching of the light (Tit. 1:15). And so with one sin after another the window gets darker and darker, until the light can hardly shine through at all, and the Christian can sin on undisturbed, with a conscience to a large extent blinded and without feeling. In His work of renewal the Holy Spirit does not create new faculties: He renews and sanctifies those already existing. Conscience is the work of the Spirit of God the Creator; the first care of the Spirit of God the Redeemer is to restore what sin has defiled. It is only by restoring conscience to full and healthy action, and revealing in it the wonderful grace of Christ, 'the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit,' that He enables the believer to live a life in the full light of God's favour. It is as the window of the heart that looks heavenward is cleansed and kept clean that we can walk in the Light.

The work of the Spirit on conscience is a threefold one. Through conscience the Spirit causes the light of God's

holy law to shine into the heart. A room may have its curtains drawn, and even its shutters closed: this cannot prevent the lightning flash from time to time shining into the darkness. Conscience may be so sin-stained and seared that the strong man within dwells in perfect peace. When the lightning from Sinai flashes into the heart, conscience wakens up, and is at once ready to admit and sustain the condemnation. Both the law and the gospel, with their call to repentance and their conviction of sin, appeal to conscience. And it is not till conscience has said Amen to the charge of transgression and unbelief that deliverance can truly come.

It is through conscience that the Spirit likewise causes the light of mercy to shine. When the windows of a house are stained, they need to be washed. How much more shall the blood of Christ cleanse your conscience! The whole aim of the precious, blood of Christ is to reach the conscience, to silence its accusations, and cleanse it, till it testify: Every stain is removed; the love of the Father streams in Christ in unclouded brightness into my soul. 'A heart sprinkled from an evil conscience,' 'having no more conscience of sin' (Heb. 9:14, 10: 2, 22), is meant to be the privilege of every believer. It becomes so when conscience learns to say Amen to God's message of the Power of Jesus' Blood.

The conscience that has been cleansed in the blood must be kept clean by a walk in the obedience of faith, with the light of God's favour shining on it. To the promise of the Indwelling Spirit, and His engagement to lead in all God's will, conscience must say its Amen too, and testify that He does it. The believer is called to walk in humble tenderness and watchfulness, lest in anything, even the least, conscience should accuse him for not having done what he knew to be right, or done what was not of faith. He may be content with nothing less than Paul's joyful testimony, I Our glorying is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, by the grace of God, we behaved ourselves in the world' (2 Cor. 1:12. Comp.Acts 23:1, 24: 16 ; 2 Tim. 1: 3). Let us note these words well: 'Our glorying is this, the testimony of our conscience! It is as the window is kept clean and bright by our abiding in the light, that we can have fellowship with the Father and the Son, the love of heaven shining in unclouded, and our love rising up in childlike trustfulness. 'Beloved! if our heart condemn us not, we have boldness toward God, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight' (1 John 3: 21,22).

The maintenance of a good conscience toward God from day to day is essential to the life of faith. The believer must aim at, must be satisfied with, nothing less than this. He may be assured that it is within his reach. The believers in the Old Testament by faith had the witness that they pleased God (Heb. 11: 4, 5, 6, 39). In the New Testament it is set before us, not only as a command to be obeyed, but as a grace to be wrought by God Himself. 'That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing, strengthened with all might according to His glorious power.' ' May God fulfil all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power.' ' Working in us that which is wellpleasing in His sight! (Col.1:10,11; 2 Thess.1:11; 1 Thess.4:1; Heb.12:28, 13:21).

The more we seek this testimony of conscience that we are doing what is well-pleasing to God, the more shall we feel the liberty, with every failure that surprises us, to look at once to the blood that ever cleanses, and the stronger will be our assurance that the indwelling sinfulness, and all its workings that are yet unknown to us, are covered by that blood too. The blood that has sprinkled the conscience abides and acts there in the power of the Eternal Life that knows no intermission, and of the unchangeable Priesthood that saves completely. 'If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."

The cause of the feebleness of our faith is owing to nothing so much as the want of a clean conscience. Mark well how closely Paul connects them in 1 Tim.: 'Love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned' (1: 5). 'Holding faith and a good conscience, which some having thrust from them, have made

shipwreck of the faith' (1:19). And especially (3: 9), ' Holding the mystery of -the faith in a pure conscience.' The conscience is the seat of faith. He that would grow strong in faith, and have boldness with God, must know that he is pleasing Him (1 John 3: 21, 22). Jesus said most distinctly that it is for those who love Him and keep His commandments, that the promise of the Spirit, with the indwelling of the Father and the Son, the abiding in His love, and power in prayer, is meant.

How can we confidently claim these promises, unless in childlike simplicity our conscience can testify that we fulfil the conditions ? Oh, ere the Church can rise to the height of her holy calling as intercessor, and claim these unlimited promises as really within her reach, believers will have to draw nigh to their Father, glorying, like Paul, in the testimony of their conscience, that, by the Grace of God, they are walking in holiness and godly sincerity. It will have to be seen that this is the -deepest humility, and brings most glory to God's free grace, to give up man's ideas of what we can attain, and accept God's declaration of what He desires and promises, as the only standard of what we are to be.

And how is this blessed life to be attained, in which we can daily appeal to God and men with Paul: 'I say the truth in Christ, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost'? The first step is: Bow very low under the reproofs of conscience. Be not content with the general confession that there is a great deal wrong. Beware of confounding actual transgression with the involuntary workings of the sinful nature. If the latter are to be conquered and made dead by the indwelling Spirit (Rom. viii. 13), you must first deal with the former. Begin with some single sin, and give conscience time in silent submission and humiliation to reprove and condemn. Say to your Father, that in this one thing you are, by His grace, going to obey. Accept anew Christ's wonderful offer to take entire possession of your heart, to dwell in you as Lord and Keeper. Trust Him by His Holy Spirit to do this, even when you feel weak and helpless. Remember that obedience, the taking and keeping Christ's words in your will and life, is the only way to prove the reality of your surrender to Him, or your interest in His work and grace. And vow in faith, that by God's Grace you will exercise yourself herein, 'alway to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man.'

When you have begun this with one sin, proceed with others, step by step. As you are faithful in keeping conscience pure, the light will shine more brightly from heaven into the heart, discovering sin you had not noticed before, bringing out distinctly the law written by the Spirit you had not been able to read. Be willing to be taught ; be trustfully sure that the Spirit will teach. Every honest effort to keep the blood-cleansed conscience clean, in the light of God, will be met with the aid of the Spirit. Only yield yourself heartily and entirely to God's will, and to the power of His Holy Spirit.

As you thus bow to the reproofs of conscience, and give yourself wholly to do God's will, your courage will grow strong that it is possible to have a conscience void of offence. The witness of conscience, as to what you are doing, and will do by grace, will be met by the witness of the Spirit as to what Christ is doing and will do. In childlike simplicity you will seek to begin each day with the simple prayer: Father! there is nothing now between Thee and Thy child. My conscience divinely cleansed in the blood, bears me witness, Father! let not even the shadow of a cloud intervene this day. In everything would I do Thy will: Thy Spirit dwells in me, and leads me, and makes me strong in Christ. And you will enter upon that life which glories in free grace alone when it says at the close of each day, 'Our glorying is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, by the Grace of God, we have behaved ourselves in the world': 'My conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.'

Gracious God! I thank Thee for the voice Thou hast given in our heart, to testify whether we are pleasing to Thee or not. I thank Thee, that when that witness condemned me, with its terrible Amen to the curse of Thy law, Thou

didst give the blood of Thy Son to cleanse the conscience. I thank Thee that at this moment my conscience can say Amen to the voice of the blood, and that I may look up to Thee in full assurance, with a heart cleansed from the evil conscience.

I thank Thee too for the Witness from heaven to what Jesus hath done and is doing for me and in me. I thank Thee that He glorifies Christ in me, gives me His Presence and His Power, and transforms me into His likeness. I thank Thee that to the presence and the work of Thy Spirit in my heart, my conscience can likewise say, Amen.

0 my Father! I desire this day to walk before Thee with a good conscience, to do nothing that might grieve Thee or my Blessed Lord Jesus. I ask Thee, may, in the power of the Holy Spirit, the cleansing in the blood be a living, continual, and most effectual deliverance from the power of sin, binding and strengthening me to Thy perfect service. And may my whole walk with Thee be in the joy of the united witness of conscience and Thy Spirit that I am wellpleasing to Thee. Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 22

The Revelation of the Spirit

My preaching was not in persuasive words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among the perfect: yet a wisdom not of this world; but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which none of the rulers of this world knoweth. But unto us God revealed it through the Spirit. The things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God, But we received, not the spirit which in of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given to us by God; which things also we speak, not in the word which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth. Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things. -1 Cor.2:4-15.

In this passage Paul contrasts the spirit of the world and the Spirit of God. The point in which the contrast specially comes out is in the wisdom or knowledge of the truth. It was in seeking 'knowledge that man fell. It was in the pride of knowledge that heathenism had its origin; 'professing themselves to be wise, they became fools' (Rom. 1: 22). It was in wisdom, philosophy, and the search after truth, that. the Greeks sought their glory. It was in the knowledge of God's will, the form of the knowledge and of the truth in the law' (Rom.2: 17-20), that the Jew made his boast. And yet when Christ, the wisdom of God, appeared on earth, Jew and Greek combined to reject Him. Man's wisdom, whether in possession of a revelation or not, is utterly insufficient for comprehending God or His wisdom. As his heart is alienated from God, so that he does not love or do His will, so his mind is darkened that he cannot know Him aright. Even when in Christ the light of God in its Divine love shone upon men, they knew it not, and saw no beauty in it.

In the Epistle to the Romans, Paul had dealt with man's trust in his own righteousness, and its insufficiency. To the Corinthians, especially in the first three chapters, he exposes the insufficiency of man's wisdom. And that not merely when it was a question of discovering God's truth and will, as with the Greeks; but even where God had revealed it, as with the Jews, man was incapable of seeing it without a Divine illumination, the light of the Holy Spirit.The rulers of this world, Jew and Gentile, had crucified the Lord of glory because they knew not the wisdom of God. In writing to believers at Corinth, and warning them against the wisdom of the world, Paul is not dealing with any heresy, Jewish or heathen. He is speaking to believers, who had fully accepted his gospel of a crucified Christ, but who were in danger, in preaching or hearing the truth, to deal with it in the power of human wisdom. He reminds them that the truth of God, as a hidden spirit mystery, can only be apprehended by a spiritual revelation. The rejection of Christ by the Jews had been the great proof of the utter incapacity of human wisdom to grasp a Divine revelation, without the spiritual internal illumination of the Holy Spirit. The Jews prided themselves on their attachment to God's word, their study of it, their conformity to it in life and conduct. The issue proved that, without their being conscious of it, they utterly misunderstood it, and rejected the very Messiah whom they thought they were waiting for and trusting in. Divine revelation, as Paul expounds it in this chapter, means three things. God must make known in His word what He thinks and does. Every preacher who is to communicate the message, must not only be in possession of the truth, but continually be taught by the Spirit how to speak it. And every hearer needs the inward illumination: it is only as he is a spiritual man, with his life under the rule of the Spirit, that his mind can take in spiritual truth.

As we have the mind, the disposition of Christ, we can discern the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. This teaching is what the Church in our days, and each believer, specially needs. With the Reformation the insufficiency of man's righteousness, of his power really to fulfil God's law, obtained universal recognition in the Reformed Churches, and in theory at least is everywhere accepted among Evangelical Christians. The insufficiency of man's wisdom has by no means obtained as clear recognition. While the need of the Holy Spirit's teaching is, in a general way, willingly admitted, it will be found that neither in the teaching of the Church, nor in the lives of believers, has this blessed truth that practical and all-embracing supremacy without which the wisdom and the spirit of this world will still assert their power.

The proof of what we have said will be found in what Paul says of His own preaching: 'Our preaching was not in man's wisdom, but in the Spirit; that your faith might not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.' He is not writing, as to the Galatians, of two gospels, but of two ways of preaching the one gospel of Christ's cross. He says that to preach it in persuasive words of man's wisdom, produces a faith that will bear the mark of its origin ; it will stand in the wisdom of man. As long as it is nourished by men and means, it may stand and flourish. But it cannot stand alone or in the day of trial - A man may, with such preaching, become a believer, but will be a feeble believer. The faith, on the other hand, begotten of a preaching in the Spirit and power, stands in the power of God. The believer is led by the preaching, by the Holy Spirit Himself, past man, to direct contact with the living God: his faith stands in the power of God. As long as the state of the great majority of our church members, notwithstanding such an abundance of the means of grace, is so feeble and sickly, with so little of the faith that stands in the power of God, mighty to overcome the world, to purify the heart, and to do the greater works, we cannot but fear that it is because too much, even of our true gospel preaching, is more in the wisdom of man than in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. If a change is to be effected both in the spirit in which our preachers and teachers speak, and our congregations listen and expect, it must commence, I am sure, in the personal life of the individual believer.

We must learn to fear our own wisdom. 'Trust in the Lord with thy whole heart, and lean not to thine own understanding.' Paul says, to believers: 'If any man thinketh that he is wise, let him become a fool, that he may be wise ' (I Cor.3:18). When Scripture tells us that 'they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh,' this includes the understanding of the flesh, the fleshly mind of which Scripture speaks. Just as in the crucifixion of self I give up my own goodness, my own strength, my own will to the death, because there is no good in it, and, look to Christ by the power of His life to give me the goodness, and the strength, and the will which is pleasing to God, so it must be very specially with my wisdom Man's mind is one of his noblest and most God-like faculties, But sin rules over it and in it. A man may be truly converted, and yet not know to what an extent it is his natural mind with which he is trying to grasp and hold the truth of God. The reason that there is so much Bible reading and teaching which has no power to elevate and sanctify the life is simply this: it is not truth which has been revealed and received through the Holy Spirit.

This holds good, too, of truth which has once been taught us by the Holy Spirit, but which, having been lodged in the understanding, is now held simply, by the memory.' Manna speedily loses its heavenliness, when stored up on earth. Truth received from heaven loses its Divine freshness, unless there every day be the anointing with fresh oil. The believer needs, day by day, hour by hour, to feel that there is nothing in which the power of the flesh, of nature, can assert itself more insidiously, than in the activity of the mind or reason in its dealing with the Divine word. This will make him feel that he must continually seek, in Paul's language, 'to become a fool.' He needs, each time he has to do with God's word, or thinks of God's truth, in faith and teachableness, to wait for the promised teaching of the Spirit. He needs ever again to ask for the circumcised ear: the ear in which the fleshly power of the understanding has been removed, and in which the spirit of the life in Christ Jesus within the heart

listens in the obedience of the life, even as Christ did. To such the word will be fulfilled : 'I thank Thee, Father, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.'

The lesson for all ministers and teachers, all professors and theologians, all students and readers of the Bible, is one of deep and searching solemnity. Have we felt, have we even sought to feel, that there must be perfect correspondence between the objective spiritual contents of the revelation, and the subjective spiritual apprehension of it on our part ? between our apprehension of it and our communication of it, both in the power of the Holy Spirit ? between our communication of it, and the reception by those to whom we bring it ? Would God that over our theological halls and our training institutes, over the studies of our commentators and writers, our ministers and teachers, there were written those words of Paul: 'The things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God : unto us God revealed them through the Spirit.' Would that our ministers could influence and train their congregations to see, that not the amount, or the clearness, or the interest of the Bible knowledge received will decide the blessing and the power that it brings, but the measure of real dependence on the Holy Spirit. 'Them that honour Me. I will honour:' nowhere will this word be found more true than here.The crucifixion of self and all its wisdom, the coming in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling, as Paul did, will most assuredly be met from above with the demonstration Of the Spirit and of power.

.Believer ! it is not enough that the light of Christ shines on you in the Word, the light of the Spirit must shine in you. Each time you come to the word, in study, in hearing a sermon, or reading a religious book, there ought to be, as distinct as your intercourse with the external means, a definite act of self -abnegation, denying your own wisdom, and. yielding yourself in faith to the Divine Teacher. Believe very distinctly that He dwells within you. He seeks the mastery, the sanctification of your inner life, in entire surrender and obedience to Jesus. Rejoice to renew your surrender to Him. Reject the spirit of the world which is still in you, with its wisdom and self - confidence; come, in poverty of spirit, to be led by the Spirit that is of God. 'Be not fashioned according to the world,' with its confidence in the flesh, and self, and its wisdom; 'but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God.' It is a transformed, renewed life, that, only wants to know God's perfect will, that will be taught by the Spirit. Cease from your own wisdom; wait for the wisdom in the inward parts which God has promised: you will increasingly be able to testify of the things which have not entered into the hearts of men to conceive: 'God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit.'

0 God! I bless Thee for the wondrous revelation of Thyself in Christ crucified, the wisdom of God, and the power of God. I bless Thee, that while man's wisdom leaves him helpless in presence of the power of sin, and death, Christ crucified proves that He is the wisdom of God by the mighty redemption He works as the power of God. And I bless Thee, that what he wrought and bestows as an Almighty Saviour is revealed within us by the Divine light of Thine Own Holy Spirit.

0 Lord! we beseech Thee, teach Thy Church that wherever Christ, as the power of God, is not manifested, it is because He is so little known as the wisdom. of God, in the light in which the indwelling Spirit alone reveals Him. Oh! teach Thy Church to lead each child of God to the personal teaching and revelation of Christ within.

Show us, 0 God ! that the one great hindrance is our own wisdom, our imagination that we can understand the Word and Truth of God. Oh! teach us to become fools that we may be wise. May our 'whole life become one continued act of faith, that the Holy Spirit will surely do His work of teaching, guiding and leading into the truth. Father ! Thou gavest Him that He might reveal Jesus in His glory within us ; we wait for this. Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 23

Spiritual or Carnal.

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not with meat; for ye were not Yet able to bear it; nay, not even now are ye able; for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal, and walk after the manner of men?'-- -I Cor.3:1-3

In the previous Chapter the Apostle had contrasted the believer as spiritual, with the unregenerate as the natural (Or Psychical) man: the man of the Spirit with the man of the soul (1 Cor.2:14, 15). Here he supplements that teaching. He tells the Corinthians that, though they, have the Spirit, he cannot call them spiritual; that epithet belongs to those who have not only received the Spirit, but have yielded themselves to Him to possess and rule their whole life. Those who have not done this, in whom the power of the flesh is still more manifest than that of the Spirit, must be called not spiritual, but fleshly or carnal. There are thus three states in which a man may be found. The unregenerate is still the natural man, not having the Spirit of God. The regenerate, who is still a babe in Christ, whether because he is only lately converted, or because he has stood still and not advanced, is the carnal man, giving way to the power of the flesh. The believer in whom the Spirit has obtained full supremacy, is the spiritual man. The whole passage is suggestive of rich instruction in regard to the life of the Spirit within us.

The young Christian is still carnal. Regeneration is a birth: the centre and root of the personality, the spirit, has been renewed and taken possession of by the Spirit of God. But time is needed for its power from that centre to extend through all the circumference of our being. The kingdom of God is like unto a seed; the life in Christ is a growth; and it would be against the laws of nature and grace alike if we expected from the babe in Christ the strength that can only be found in the young men, or the rich experience of the fathers. Even where in the young convert there is great singleness of heart and faith, with true love and devotion to the Saviour,time is needed for a deeper knowledge of self and sin, for a spiritual insight into what God's will and grace are. With the young believer it is not unnatural that the emotions are deeply stirred, and that the mind delights in the contemplation of Divine truth; with the growth in grace, the will becomes the more important thing, and the waiting for the Spirit's power in the life and character more than the delight in those thoughts and images of the life which alone the mind could give. We need not wonder if the babe in Christ is still carnal.

Many Christians remain carnal. God has not only called us to grow, but has provided all the conditions and powers needful for growth. And yet it is, sadly true, that there are many Christians who, like the Corinthians, remain babes in Christ when they ought to be going on to perfection, 'attaining unto a full-grown man.' In some cases the blame is almost more with the Church and its teaching, than with the individuals themselves. When the preaching makes salvation chiefly to consist in pardon and peace and the hope of heaven, or when, if a holy life be preached, the truth of Christ our Sanctification, our Sufficient Strength to be holy, and the Holy Spirit's indwelling, be not taught clearly and in the power of the Spirit, growth can hardly be expected: Ignorance, human and defective views of the gospel, as the power of God unto a, present salvation in sanctification, are the cause of the evil.

In other cases the root of the evil is to be found in the unwillingness of the Christian to deny self and crucify the flesh. The call of Jesus to every disciple is,'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself.' The Spirit is only given to the obedient; He can only do His work in those who are willing absolutely to give up self to the death.

The sin that proved that the Corinthians were carnal was their jealousy and strife. When Christians are not willing to give up the sin of selfishness and temper; when, whether in the home relationship or in the wider circle of church and public life, they want to retain the liberty of giving way to, or excusing evil feelings, of pronouncing their own judgments, and speaking words that are not in perfect love, then they remain carnal. With all their knowledge, and their enjoyment of religious ordinances, and their work for God's kingdom, they are carnal and not spiritual. They grieve the Holy Spirit of God; they cannot have the testimony that they are pleasing to God. God is Love: if we would not be carnal, let us love. 'Above all things, put on love, which is the bond of perfectness.'

The carnal Christian cannot apprehend spiritual truth. Paul writes to these Corinthians: 'I fed you with milk, and not with meat; for ye were not able to bear it; nay, not even now are ye able.' The Corinthians prided themselves on their wisdom; Paul thanked God that they were 'enriched in all knowledge.' There was nothing in His teaching that they would not have been able to comprehend with the understanding. But the real spiritual entering into the truth in power, so as to possess it and be possessed by it, so as to have not only the thoughts but the very thing the words speak of, this the Holy Spirit only can give. And He gives it only in the spiritually-minded man. The teaching and leading of the Spirit is given to the obedient, is preceded by the dominion of the Spirit in mortifying the deeds of the body (see Rom.8: 13 and 14). Spiritual knowledge is not deep thought, but living contact, entering into and being united to the truth as it is in Jesus, a spiritual reality, a substantial existence. 'The Spirit teacheth, combining spiritual things with spiritual;' into a spiritual mind He works spiritual truth. It is not the power of intellect, it is not even the earnest desire to know the truth, that fits a man for the Spirit's teaching; it is a life yielded to Him in waiting dependence and full obedience to be made spiritual, that receives the spiritual wisdom and understanding. In the mind (nous, in the Scripture meaning of the term) these two elements, the moral and the cognitive, are united; only as the former has precedence and sway, can the latter apprehend what God has spoken.

It is easy to understand how a carnal or fleshly life with its walk, and the fleshly mind with its knowledge, act and react on each other. As far as we are giving way to the flesh, we are incapable of receiving spiritual insight into truth. We may 'know all mysteries, and have all knowledge,'without love, the love which the Spirit works in the innerlife; it is only a knowledge that puffeth up, it profiteth nothing. The carnal life makes the knowledge carnal. And this knowledge again, being thus held in the fleshly mind, strengthens the religion of the flesh, of self-trust and self effort; the truth so received has no power to renew and make free. No wonder that there is so much Bible teaching and Bible knowledge, with so little of real spiritual result in a life of holiness. Would God that His word might sound through His Church: 'Whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal?' Unless we be living spiritual lives, full of humility, and love, and self-sacrifice, spiritual truth, the truth of God, cannot enter or profit us. Love alone is light: want of love is darkness (1 John 2:9).

Every Christian is called of God to be a spiritual man. Paul reproves these Corinthians, only but a few years since brought out of gross heathenism, that they are not yet spiritual. The great redemption in Christ had this most distinctly as its object, the removal of every hindrance, that the Spirit of God might be able to make man's heart and life a worthy home for God who is a Spirit. That redemption was no failure; the Holy Spirit came down to inaugurate a new, before unknown, dispensation of indwelling life and power. The promise and the love of the Father, the power and the glory of the Son, the presence of the Spirit on earth all are pledge and guarantee that it

can be. As sure as the natural man can become a regenerate man, can a regenerate man, who is still carnal, become spiritual.

And why is it not so ? The question brings us into the presence of that strange and unfathomable mystery-the power God has given men of accepting or refusing His offers, of being true or being unfaithful to the grace He has given. We have already spoken of that unfaithfulness on the part of the Church, in its defective teaching of the indwelling and the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit in the believer, and on the part of believers in their unwillingness to forsake all to let the Holy Spirit get entire possession, and do a perfect work in them. Let us here rather seek, once again, to gather up what Scripture teaches as to the way to become spiritual.

It is the Holy Spirit who makes the spiritual man. He alone can do it. He does it most certainly where the whole man is yielded up to Him. To have the whole being pervaded, influenced, sanctified by the Holy Spirit; to have first our spirit, then the soul, with the will, the feelings, the mind, and so even the body, under His control, moved and guided by Him, this makes and marks the spiritual man.

The first step on the way to this is faith. We must seek the deep, living, absorbing conviction that there is a Holy Spirit in us; that He is the Mighty Power of God dwelling and working within; that He is the representative of Jesus, making Him present within us as our Redeemer King, mighty to save. In the union of a holy fear and trembling at the almost tremendous glory of this truth of an Indwelling God, with the childlike joy and trust of knowing Him to be the Paraclete, the Inbringer of the Divine and irrevocable presence of God and of Christ, this thought must become the inspiration of life: The Holy Spirit has His home within us: in our spirit is His hidden, blessed dwelling-place.

As we are filled with the faith of what He is and will do, and see that it is not done, we ask for the hindrance. We find that there is an opposing power, the flesh. From Scripture we learn how the flesh has its twofold action : from the flesh springs not only unrighteousness, but self-righteousness. Both must be confessed and surrendered to Him whom the Spirit would reveal and enthrone as Lord, our Mighty Saviour. All that is carnal and sinful, all the works of the flesh, must be given up and cast out. But no less must all that is carnal, however religious it appears, all confidence in the flesh, all self-effort and self-struggling be rooted out. The soul, with its power, must be brought into the captivity and subjection of Jesus Christ. In deep and daily dependence on God must the Holy Spirit be accepted, waited for, and followed.

Thus walking in faith and obedience, we may count on the Holy Spirit to do a divine and most blessed work within us. 'If we live by the Spirit;' --this is the faith that is needed ; we believe that God, a Spirit dwells in us. Then follows: 'by the Spirit let us live;' this is the obedience that is asked. In the faith of that Holy Spirit who is in us, we know that we have sufficient strength to walk by the Spirit, and yield ourselves to His mighty working, to work in us to will and to do all that is pleasing in God's sight.

Gracious God ! we humbly pray Thee to teach us all to profit by the solemn lessons of this portion of Thy blessed word.

Fill us with holy fear and trembling lest, with all our knowledge of the truth of Christ and the Spirit, we should be carnal in disposition and conduct, not walking in the love and purity of Thy Holy Spirit. May we understand that knowledge only puffeth up, unless it be under the rule of the love that buildeth up.

Give us to hear Thy call to all Thy children to be spiritual. It is Thy purpose, that even as with Thy beloved Son,

their whole daily life, even in the very least things, should give evidence of being the fruit of Thy Spirit's indwelling. May we all accept the call, as from Thy love, inviting us to our highest blessedness, conformity to Thy likeness in Christ Jesus.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 24

The Temple of the Holy Spirit.

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ?'--I Cor.3:16.

In using the illustration of the Temple as the type of God's dwelling in us by the Holy Spirit, Scripture invites us to study the analogy. The Temple was made in all things according to a pattern seen by Moses on the Mount, a shadow cast by the Eternal Spiritual Realities which it was to symbolize. One of these realities-for Divine Truth is exceeding rich and full and has many and very diverse applications-One of these realities shadowed forth by the Temple, is man's threefold nature. Because man was created in the image of God, the Temple is not only the setting forth of the mystery of man's approach into the presence of God, but equally of God's way of entering into man, to take up His abode with him.

We are familiar with the division of the Temple into three parts. There was its exterior, seen by all men, with the outer court, in to which every Israelite might enter, and where all the external religious service was performed. There was the Holy Place, into which alone the priests might enter, to present to God the blood or the incense, the bread or the oil, they had brought from without. But though near, they were still not within the veil; into the immediate presence of God they might not come. God dwelt in the Holiest of all,in a light inaccessible, where none might venture nigh. The momentary entering of the High Priest once a year was but to bring into full consciousness the truth that there was no place for man there, until the veil should have been rent and taken away.

Man is God's temple. In him, too, there are the three parts. In the body you have the outer court, the external visible life, where all the conduct has to be regulated by God's law, and where all the service consists in looking to that which is done without us and for us to bring us nigh to God. Then there is the soul, with its inner life, its power of mind and feeling and will. In the regenerate man this is the Holy Place, where thoughts and affections and desires move to and fro as the priests of the sanctuary, rendering God their service in the full light of consciousness. And then comes within the veil, hidden from all human sight and light, the hidden inmost sanctuary, ' the secret place of the Most High,' where God dwells, and where man may not enter, until the veil is rent at God's own bidding.

Man has not only body and soul, but also spirit. Deeper down than where the soul with its consciousness can enter, there is a spirit-nature linking man with God.

So fearful is sin's power, that in some this power is given up to death: they are sensual, not having the Spirit. In others, it is nothing more than a dormant power, a possibility waiting for the quickening of the Holy Spirit. In the believer it is the inner chamber of the heart, of which the Spirit has taken. possession, and from out of which He waits to do His glorious work, making soul and body holy to the Lord.

And yet this indwelling, unless where it is recognised, and yielded to, and humbly maintained in adoration and love, often brings comparatively little blessing. And the one great lesson which the truth that we are God's temple,

because His Spirit dwells in us, must teach us, is this, to, acknowledge the Holy Presence that dwells within us. This alone will enable us to regard the whole temple, even to the outmost court, as sacred to His service, and to yield every power of our nature to His leading and will. The most sacred part of the Temple, that for which all the rest existed and on which all depended, was the Holiest of all. Even though the priests might never enter there, and might never see the glory that dwelt there, all their conduct was regulated, and all their faith animated, by the thought of the unseen Presence there. It was this that gave the sprinkling of the blood and the burning of the incense their value. It was this made it a privilege to draw nigh, and gave confidence to go out and bless. It was the Most Holy, the Holiest of all, that made the place of their serving to them a Holy Place. Their whole life was controlled and inspired by the faith of the unseen indwelling glory within the veil.

It is not otherwise with the believer. Until he learns by faith to tremble in presence of the wondrous mystery that he is God's temple, because God's Spirit dwelleth in him, he never will yield himself to his high vocation with the holy reverence or the joyful confidence that becomes him. As long as he looks only into the Holy Place, into the heart, as far as man can see and know what passes there, he will often search in vain for the Holy Spirit, or only find cause for bitter shame that his workings are so few and feeble. Each of us must learn to know that there is a Holiest of all in that temple which he himself is; the secret place of the Most High within us must become the central truth in our temple worship. This must be to us the meaning of our confession: 'I believe in the Holy Ghost.'

And how is this deep faith in the hidden indwelling to become ours ? Taking our stand, upon God's blessed Word, we must accept and appropriate its teaching. We must take trouble to believe that God means what it says. I am a temple ; just such a temple as God commanded to be built of old ; He meant me to see in it what I am to be. There the Holiest of all was the central point, the essential thing. It was all dark, secret, hidden,till the time of unveiling came. It demanded and received the faith of priest and people. The Holiest of all within me, too, is unseen and hidden, a thing for faith alone to know and deal with. Let me, as I approach to the Holy One, bow before Him in deep and lowly reverence. Let me there say that I believe what He says, that His Holy Spirit,

God, one with the Father and the Son, even now has His abode within me. I will meditate, and be still, until something of the overwhelming glory of the truth fall upon me, and faith begin to realize it: I am His temple, and in the secret place He sits upon His throne. As I yield myself in silent meditation and worship day by day, surrendering and setting open my whole being to Him, He will in His divine, loving, living power, shine into my consciousness the light of His presence.

As this thought fills the heart, the faith of the indwelling though hidden presence will influence; the Holy Place will be ruled from the Most Holy. The world of consciousness in the soul, with all its thoughts and feelings, its affections and purposes, will come and surrender themselves to the Holy Power that sits within on the throne. Amid the terrible experience of failure and sin a new hope will dawn. Though long I most earnestly strove, I could not keep the Holy Place for God, because I knew not that He kept the Most Holy for Himself. If I give Him there the glory due to His name, in the holy worship of the inner temple, He will send forth His light and His truth through my whole being,and through mind and will reveal His power to sanctify and to bless. And through the soul, thus coming ever more mightily under His rule, His power will work out even into the body. With passions and appetites within, yea, with every thought brought into subjection, the hidden Holy Spirit will through the soul penetrate ever deeper into the body. Through the Spirit the deeds of the body will be made dead, and the river of water, that flows from under 'the throne of God and the Lamb, will go through all the outer nature, with its cleansing and quickening power.

0 Brother, do believe that you are the temple of the living God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ! You

have been sealed with the Holy Spirit; He is the mark, the living assurance of your sonship and your Father's love. If this have hitherto been a thought that has brought you but little comfort, see if the reason is not here. You sought for Him in the Holy Place, amid the powers and services of your inner life which come within your vision, And you could hardly discern Him there. And so you could not appropriate the comfort and strength the Comforter was meant to bring. No, my brother, not there, not there. Deeper down, in the secret place of the Most High, there you will find Him. Within you! in your inmost part! there faith will find Him. And as faith worships in holy reverence before the Father, and the heart trembles at the thought of what it has found, wait in holy stillness on God to grant you the mighty working of His Spirit; wait in holy stillness for the Spirit, and be assured He will, as God, arise and fill His temple with His glory.

And then remember, the veil was but for a time. When the preparation was complete, the veil of the flesh was rent. As you yield your soul's inner life to the inmost life of the Spirit, as the traffic between the Most Holy and the Holy becomes more true and unbroken, the fulness of the time will come in your soul. In the power of Him,in whom the veil was rent that the Spirit might stream forth from His glorified body, there will come to you, too, an experience in which the veil shall be taken away, and the Most Holy and the Holy be thrown into one. The hidden glory of the Secret Place will stream into your conscious daily life: the service of the Holy Place will all be in the power of the Eternal Spirit.

Brother, let us fall down and worship! 'Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord; for he is waked up out of His holy habitation.'

Most Holy God! in adoring wonder I bow before Thee in presence of this wondrous mystery of grace: my spirit, soul, and body Thy temple.

In deep silence and worship I accept the blessed revelation, that in me too there is a Holiest of all, and that there Thy hidden Glory has its abode.

0 my God, forgive me that I have so little known it.

I do now tremblingly accept the blessed truth: God the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, who is God Almighty, dwells in me.

0 my Father, reveal within what it means, lest I sin against Thee by saying it and not living it.

Blessed Jesus! to Thee, who sittest upon the throne, I yield my whole being. In Thee I trust to rise up in power and have dominion within me.

In Thee I believe for the full 'Streaming forth of the living waters.

Blessed Spirit! Holy Teacher! Mighty Sanctifier! Thou art within me. On Thee do I wait all the day. I belong to Thee. Take entire possession of me for the Father and the Son Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 25

The Ministry of the Spirit

'Our sufficiency is of God ; who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant; not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death came with glory, how shall not rather the ministration of the Spirit be with glory ?'---2 Cor. 3:6, 7.

In none of his Epistles does Paul expound his conception of the Christian ministry so clearly and fully as in the second to the Corinthians. The need of vindicating his apostleship against detractors, the consciousness of Divine Power and Glory working in him in the midst of weakness, the intense longing of his loving heart to communicate what he had to impart, stir his soul to its very depths, and he lays open to us the inmost secrets of the life that makes one a true minister of Christ and His Spirit. In our text we have the central thought: he finds his sufficiency of strength, the inspiration and rule of all his conduct, in the fact that he has been made a minister of the Spirit. If we take the different passages in which mention is made of the Holy Spirit in the first half of the Epistle,' we shall see what, in his view, the place and work of the Holy Spirit in the ministry is, and what the character of a ministry under His leading and in His power.

In the Epistle, Paul will have to speak with authority. He begins by placing himself on a level with his readers. In his first mention of the Spirit he tells them that the Spirit that is in him is no other than is in them. ' Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; who also sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts' (1:21, 22). The anointing of the believer with the Spirit, bringing him into fellowship with Christ, the anointed One, and revealing what He is to us; the sealing, marking him as God's own, and giving him assurance of it; the earnest of the Spirit, securing at once the foretaste and the fitness for the heavenly inheritance in glory: of all this he and they are together partakers. However much there was among the Corinthians ,that was wrong and unholy, Paul speaks to them, thinks of them, and loves them as one in Christ 'He that stablisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us,'-this deep sense of unity fills his soul, comes out throughout the Epistle, and is the secret of his power. See 1: 6, 10, 2: 3 : 'My joy is the joy of you all;' 4:5 : 'ourselves your servants ;' 4: 10-12 : ' death worketh in us, life in you;' 4:15 : 'all things are for your sakes;' 6:11, 7: 3 : 'you are in our hearts to live and die with you.' If the unity of the Spirit, the consciousness of being members one of another, be necessary in all believers, how much more must it be the mark of those who are ministers? The power of the ministry to the saints depends upon the unity of the Spirit; the full recognition of believers as partakers of the anointing. But to this end the minister must himself live as an anointed and sealed one, making manifest that he has the earnest of the Spirit in his heart.

The second passage is 3: 3: 'Ye are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in tables that are hearts of flesh.' As distinct an act of God as was the writing of the law on the tables of stone, is the writing of the law of the Spirit in the new covenant, and of the name of Christ on the heart. It is a divine work, in which, as truly as God wrote of old, the Holy Spirit uses the tongue of His minister as His pen. It is this truth that needs to be restored in the ministry: not only that the Holy Spirit is needed, but that He waits to do the work, and that He will do it, when the right relation to Him is maintained. Paul's own experience

at Corinth (Acts 18: 5-11 ; 1 Cor. 2:3) teaches us what conscious weakness, what fear and trembling, what sense of absolute helplessness may be, or rather is, needed, if the power of God is to rest upon us. Our whole Epistle confirms this: it was as a man under sentence of death, bearing about the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the power of Christ wrought in him. The Spirit of God stands in contrast to the flesh, the world, and self, with its life and strength; it is as these are broken down, and the flesh has nothing to glory in, that the Spirit will work. Oh that every minister's tongue might be prepared for the Holy Spirit to use it as a pen wherewith He writes!

Then come the words of our text (3: 6, 7), to teach us what the special characteristic is of this New Covenant Ministry of the Spirit: it gives life.' The antithesis, 'the letter killeth,' applies not only to the law of the Old Testament, but, according to the teaching of Scripture, to all knowledge which is not in the quickening power of the Spirit. We cannot insist upon it too earnestly, that, even as the law, though we know it was 'spiritual,' so the gospel too has its letter. The gospel may 'be preached most clearly and faithfully; it may exert a strong moral influence ; and yet the faith that comes of it may stand in the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God. If there is one thing the Church needs to cry for on behalf of its ministers and students, it is that the Ministry of the Spirit may be restored in its full power. Pray that God may teach them what it is personally to live in the anointing, the scaling, the earnest of the Indwelling Spirit ; what it is to know that the letter killeth ; what it is that the Spirit in very deed giveth life; and what, above all, the personal life is under which the Ministry of the Spirit can freely work.

Paul now proceeds to contrast the two dispensations and the different characters of those who live in them.' He points out how, as long as the mind is blinded, there is a veil on the heart which can only be taken away as we turn to the Lord. And then he adds (3:17, 18): 'Now the Lord is the Spirit ; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit.' It is because God 'is a Spirit' that He can give the Spirit. It was when our Lord Jesus was exalted into the life of the Spirit that He became 'theLord the Spirit,' could give the New Testament Spirit, and in the Spirit come Himself to His people. The disciples knew Jesus long, without knowing Him as the Lord the Spirit. Paul speaks of this, too, with regard to himself (2 Cor.5:16). There may in the ministry be much earnest gospel preaching of the Lord Jesus as the Crucified One, without the preaching of Him as the Lord the Spirit. It is only as the latter truth is apprehended, and experienced, and then preached, that the double blessing will come that Paul speaks of here. 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, is liberty:' believers will be led into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom.8: 2 ; Gal. 5:1,18). And then: 'we are transformed into the same image, even as from the Lord the Spirit:' He will do the work for which He was sent-to reveal the glory of the Lord in us and as we behold that glory, we shall be changed from glory to glory. Of the time before Pentecost it was written: 'The Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified.' But when He had been 'justified in the Spirit, and received up in glory,' the Spirit came forth from 'the excellent glory' into our hearts, that we, with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord might be changed into His likeness, from glory to glory. What a calling ! the Ministry of the Spirit! to hold up the glory of the Lord to His redeemed, and to be used by His Spirit in working their transformation into His likeness. 'Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, we faint not.' It is as the knowledge and acknowledgment of Christ as the Lord the Spirit, and of the Spirit, of Christ as changing believers into His likeness, lives in the Church, that the ministry among believers will be in Life and Power,-in very deed, a Ministry of the Spirit.

The power of the ministry on the Divine side is the Spirit; on the human, it is here, as everywhere, faith. The next mention of the Spirit is in 4:13 : ' Having the same Spirit of faith,' After having, in chap.3, set forth the glory of the Ministry of the Spirit, and, 4:1-6, the glory of the Gospel it preached, he turns to the vessels in which this treasure is. He has to vindicate his apparent weakness. But he does far more. Instead of apologizing for it, he expounds its Divine meaning and glory, He proves how just this constituted his power, because in his weakness

Divine power could work. It has been so ordained, 'that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.' So his perfect fellowship with Jesus was maintained as he bore about 'the putting to death of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also might be manifested in his mortal body.' So there was even in his sufferings something of the vicarious element that marked his Lord's: 'So then death worketh in us, but life in you.' And then he adds, as the expression of the animating power that sustained him through all endurance and labour: 'But having the same Spirit of faith,' of which we read in the, Scripture, 'according to that which is written, I believed, and therefore did I speak; we also believe, and therefore we also speak; knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also with Jesus, and shall present us with you.'

Faith is the evidence of things not seen. It sees the Invisible, and lives in it. Beginning with trust in Jesus, ' in whom, though ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice,' it goes on through the whole of the Christian life. Whatever is of the Spirit, is by faith. The great work of God, in opening the heart of His child to receive more of the Spirit, is to school his faith into more perfect freedom from all that is seen, and the more entire repose in God, even to the assurance that God dwelleth and worketh mightily in his weakness. For this end trials and sufferings are sent. Paul uses very remarkable language in regard to his sufferings in the first chapter (ver. 9): 'We ourselves have had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.' Even Paul was in danger of trusting in himself. Nothing is more natural; all life is confident of self; and nature is consistent with itself till it dies. For the mighty work he had to do, he needed a trust in none less than the Living God, who raiseth the dead. To this God led him by giving him, in the affliction which came upon him in Asia, the sentence of death in himself. The trial of his faith was its strength. In our context he returns to this thought: the fellowship of the dying of Jesus is to him the means and the assurance of the experience of the power of Christ's life. In the spirit of this faith he speaks: 'Knowing that He which raised up Jesus shall raise up us also.'

It was not until Jesus had died that the Spirit of life could break forth from Him. The life of Jesus was born out of the grave: it is a life out of death. It is as we daily die, and bear about the dying of Jesus; as flesh and self are kept crucified and mortified; as we have in ourselves God's sentence of death on all that is of self and nature,that the life and the Spirit of Jesus will be manifest in us. And this is the Spirit of faith, that in the midst of weakness and apparent death, it counts on God that raiseth the dead. And this is the Ministry of the Spirit, when faith glories in infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon it. It is as our faith does not stagger at the earthiness and weakness of the vessel, as it consents that the excellency of the power shall be, not from ourselves, or in anything we feel, but of God alone, that the Spirit will work in the power of the living God.

We have the same thought in the two remaining passages. In chap. 5:5, he speaks again of 'the earnest of the Spirit' in connection with our groaning and being burdened. And then in chap.6: 6, the Spirit is introduced in the midst of the mention of his distresses and labours as the mark of his ministry. 'In everything commending ourselves, as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, . . . in the Holy Ghost, . . . as dying, and yet, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich.' The Power of Christ in the Holy Spirit was to Paul such a living reality, that the weakness of the flesh only led him the more to rejoice and to trust it. The Holy Spirit's dwelling and working in Him was consciously the secret spring and the Divine power of his ministry.

We may well ask, Does the Holy Spirit take the place in our ministry He did in Paul's ? There is not a minister or member of the Church who has not a vital interest in the answer. The question is not whether the doctrine of the absolute need of the Holy Spirit's working is admitted; but whether there is given to the securing of is presence and working that proportion of the time and life, of the thought and faith of the ministry, which His place, as the Spirit of the Lord Jesus on the Throne, demands. Has the HolySpirit the place in the Church which our Lord Jesus would wish Him to have? When our hearts open to the inconceivably glorious Truth that He is the Mighty Power

of God dwelling in us, that in Him the Living Christ works through us, that He is the Real Presence with us of the Glorified Lord on the Throne, we shall feel that the one need of the ministry and the Church is this: to wait at the footstool of the Throne without ceasing for the clothing with the Power that comes from on high. The Spirit of Christ, in His love and power, in His death and life, is the Spirit of the ministry. As it possesses this, it will be what the Head of the Church meant it to be, the Ministry of the Spirit.

Blessed Father! we thank Thee for the institution of the Ministry of the Word, as the great means through which our exalted Lord does His saving work by the Holy Spirit. We thank Thee that it is a Ministry of the Spirit, and for all the blessing Thou hast wrought through it in the world. Our prayer is, most Blessed God! that Thou wouldst increasingly and manifestly make it throughout Thy Church what Thou wouldst have it be-a Ministry of the Spirit and of Power.

Give Thy servants and people everywhere a deep sense of how much it still comes short of Thy purpose. Reveal how much there is in it of trust in the flesh, of man's zeal and strength, of the wisdom of this world. Teach all Thy true servants the holy secret of giving place to the Spirit of Christ, that He may use them. May the conscious presence of Christ in their hearts by the Holy Spirit give them great boldness of speech. May the power of the Holy Spirit in their whole life make them fit vessels for Him to use in teaching others. May Divine Power in the midst of weakness be the mark of their public ministry.

Teach Thy people to wait on their teaching, to receive it, to plead with Thee for it as a Ministry of the Spirit. And may the lives of believers increasingly be, in the power of such a ministry, those of men led and sanctified by the Holy Ghost. Amen,

' We are also weak In Him, but shall live with Him through the power of God toward you.' With martyrs and missionaries, persecution and tribulation have been the fellowship of Christ's suffering and weakness, His Power and Spirit. We may invite neither persecutions nor suffering ; how can in our days this fellowship of Christ's suffering and dying, the rending of the flesh, so indispensable to the Ministry of the Spirit, be maintained ? In a deep entering into the needs and the sorrows of the suffering humanity around us. And in that self-denial which in nothing allows the flesh, the self-life, to have its way, but increasingly seeks in utter weakness to make way for Christ's power to work, and depends upon His Spirit.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 26

The Spirit and the Flesh.

'Are you so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now perfected in the flesh?'- Gal.3:3

'We are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh; that I myself might have confidence even in the flesh.'- Phil 3:3

The flesh is the name by which Scripture designates our fallen nature, - soul and body. The soul at creation was placed between the spiritual or Divine and the sensible or worldly to each its due, and guide them into that union which would result in man attaining his destiny, a spiritual body. When the soul yielded to the temptation of the sensible, it broke away from the rule of the Spirit and came under the power of the body-it became flesh. And now the flesh is not only without the Spirit, but even hostile to it;`the flesh lusteth against the Spirit.'

In this antagonism of the flesh to the Spirit there are two sides. On the one hand, the flesh lusts against the Spirit in its committing sin and transgressing God's law. On the other hand, its hostility to the Spirit is no less manifested in its seeking to serve God and do His will. In yielding to the flesh, the soul sought itself instead of the God to whom the Spirit linked it; selfishly prevailed over God's will; selfishness became its ruling principle. And now, so subtle and mighty is his spirit of self, that the flesh, not only in sinning against God, but even when the soul learns to serve God, still asserts its power, refuses to let the Spirit alone lead, and, in its efforts to be religious ,is still the great enemy that ever hinders and quenches the Spirit.It is owing to this deceitfulness of the flesh that there often takes place what Paul speaks of to the Galatians:'Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now perfected in the flesh ? ' Unless the surrender to the Spirit be very entire, and the holy waiting on Him be kept up in great dependence and humility, what has been begun in the Spirit, very easily and very speedily passes over into confidence in the flesh. And the remarkable thing is, what at first sight might appear a paradox, that just where the flesh seeks to serve God, there it becomes the strength of sin.

Do we not know, how the Pharisees, with 'self-righteousness and carnal religion, fell into pride and selfishness, and became the servants of sin? Was it not just among the Galatians, of whom Paul asks the question about perfecting in flesh what was begun in the Spirit, and whom he has so to warn against the righteousness of works, that the works of the flesh were so manifest,and that they were in danger of devouring one another? Satan has no more crafty device for keeping souls in bondage than inciting them to a religion in the flesh. He knows that the power of flesh can never please God or conquer sin, and in due time the flesh that has gained supremacy over the Spirit in the service of God, will assert and maintain that same supremacy in the service of sin. It is only where the Spirit truly and unceasingly has the entire lead and rule in the life of worship, that it will have the power to lead and rule in the life of practical obedience. If I am to deny self in: intercourse with men, to conquer selfishness and temper and want of love, I must first learn to deny self in the intercourse with God. There the soul, seat of self, must learn to bow to the Spirit, where God dwells.

The contrast between the worship in the Spirit and the trusting in the flesh is very beautifully expressed in Paul's

description of the true circumcision, -the circumcision of the heart,-whose praise is not of men, but of God: `Who worship the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh.' Placing the glorying in Christ Jesus in the centre, as the very essence of the Christian faith and life, he marks on the one hand the great danger by which it is beset, on the other the safeguard by which its full enjoyment is secured. Confidence in the flesh is the one thing above all others that renders the glorying in Christ Jesus of none effect ; worship by the Spirit the one thing that alone can make it indeed life and truth. May the Spirit reveal to us what it is thus to glory in Christ Jesus!

That there is a glorying in Christ Jesus that is accompanied by much confidence in the flesh, all history and experience teach us. Among the Galatians it was so. The teachers whom Paul used so earnestly were all preachers of Christ His cross. But they preached it, not as men taught by the Spirit to know what the infinite and pervading influence of that cross must be, but those who; having had the beginnings of God's Spirit, had yet allowed their own wisdom and their thoughts to say what that cross meant, and so reconciled it with a religion which to a very extent was legal and carnal. And the story of the Galatian Church is repeated to this day even in the Churches that are most confidently assured that they are free from the Galatian error. Just notice how often the doctrine of justification faith is spoken of as if that were the only teaching of the Epistle, while the doctrine of the Spirit's indwelling as received by faith, and walking by the Spirit, is hardly mentioned.

Christ crucified is the wisdom of God. The confidence in the flesh, in connection with the glorying in Christ, is seen in confidence in its own wisdom. Scripture is studied, and preached, and heard, and believed in, very much in the power of the natural mind with little insistance upon the absolute need the Spirit's personal teaching. It is seen in the absolute confidence with which men know that they have the truth, though they have it far more from human than Divine teaching, and in the absence of that teachableness that waits for God to reveal His truth in His own light.

Christ, through the Holy Spirit, is not only the Wisdom but the Power of God. The confidence in the flesh, along with much glorying in Christ Jesus, to be seen and felt in so much of the work of the Christian Church in which human effort and human arrangement take a much larger place than the waiting on the Power that comes from on high. In the larger ecclesiastical organizations, in individual churches and circles, in the inner life of the heart and closet--alas! how much unsuccessful effort, what oft-repeated failure, is to be traced to this one evil! There is no want of acknowledging Christ, His person and work, as our only hope, no want of giving Him the glory, and yet so much confidence in the flesh, rendering it of none effect.

Let me here ask again, whether there be not many a one striving earnestly for a life in the fullness of consecration and the fulness of blessing who will find here the secret of failure. To help such has been one of my first objects and most earnest prayers in writing this book. As in sermon or address, in book or conversation or private prayer, the fulness of Jesus was opened up to them, with the possibility of a holy life in Him, the soul felt it all so beautiful and so simple, that nothing could any longer keep it back. And perhaps, as it accepted of what was seen to be so sure and so near, it entered into an enjoyment and experienced a power before unknown. It had now learnt to glory in Christ Jesus! But it did not last. There was a worm at the root. Vain was the search for what the cause of the discomfiture was, or the way of restoration. Frequently the only answer that could be found was that the surrender was not entire, or faith's acceptance not perfect. And yet the soul felt sure that it was ready, as far as it knew, to give up all, and it did long to let Jesus have all and to trust Him for all. It could almost become hopeless of an impossible perfection, if perfect consecration and perfect faith were to be the condition of the blessing. And the promise had been that it would all be so simple,--just the life for the poor and feeble ones.

Listen, my brother, to the blessed teaching of God’s word today. It was the confidence in the flesh that spoilt thy

glorying in Christ Jesus. It was Self doing what the Spirit alone can do;it was Soul taking the lead, in the hope that the Spirit would second its efforts, instead of trusting the Holy Spirit to lead and do all, and then waiting Him. It was following Jesus, without the denial of self. It was this was the secret trouble. Come and listen to Paul as he tells of the only safeguard against this danger: ' We are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.' Here are the two elements of spiritual worship, The Spirit exalts Jesus, and abases the flesh. And if we would truly glory in Jesus, and have Him glorified in us, if we would know the glory of Jesus in personal and unchanging experience, free from the impotence which always marks the efforts of the flesh, we must simply learn what this worship of God by the Spirit is.

I can only repeat, once again, what it is the purpose of this whole book to set forth as God's truth from His blessed word: Glory in Christ Jesus. Glory in Him as the Glorified One who baptizeth with the Holy Spirit. In great simplicity and trustfulness believe in Him as having given His own Spirit within you. Believe in that gift; believe in the Holy Spirit dwelling within you. Accept this the secret of the life of Christ in you: the Holy Spirit is dwelling in the hidden recesses of your Spirit. Meditate on it, believe Jesus and His Word concerning it, until your soul bows with holy fear and awe before God under the glory of the truth: the Holy Spirit of God is indeed dwelling in me.

Yield yourself to His leading. We have seen that leading is not first in the mind or thoughts, but in the life and disposition. Yield yourself to God, to be guided by the Holy Spirit in all your conduct. He is promised to those who love Jesus and obey Him: fear not to say that He knows you love and do obey Him with your whole heart. Remember, then, what the one central object of His coming was : to restore the departed Lord Jesus to His disciples. ` I will not leave you orphans,' said Jesus ; ' I will come again to you.' I cannot glory a distant Jesus, from whom I am separated. When I try to do it, it is a thing of effort; I must have the help of the flesh to do it. I can only truly glory in a present Saviour, whom the Holy Spirit glorifies, reveals in His glory, within me. As He does this, the flesh is abased, and kept in its place of crucifixion as an accursed thing: as He does it, the deeds of the flesh are made to die. And my sole religion will be: no confidence in the flesh, glorying in Christ Jesus, worship by the Spirit of God.

Beloved believer! having begun in the Spirit, continue, go on, persevere in the Spirit. Beware of for one single moment, continuing or perfecting a work of the Spirit in the flesh. Let 'no confidence in the flesh' be your battle-cry ; let, a deep trust of the flesh and fear of grieving the Spirit by walking after the flesh, keep you very low and humble before God. Pray God for the spirit of revelation,that you may see how Jesus is all and does all, and how by the Holy Spirit a Divine Life indeed takes the place of your life, and Jesus is enthroned as the Keeper and Guide and Life of the soul.

Blessed God and Father! We thank Thee for the wondrous provision Thou hast made for Thy children's drawing nigh to Thee, glorying in Christ Jesus, and worshipping by the Spirit. Grant, we pray Thee, that such may be our life and all our religious service.

We feel the need of asking Thee to show us how the one great hindrance to such a life is the power of the flesh and the efforts of, the self-life. Open our eyes, we pray Thee, to this snare of Satan. May we all see how secret and how subtle is the temptation to have confidence in the flesh, and how easily we are led to, perfect , in the flesh what has been begun in the Spirit. May we learn to trust Thee to work in us by Thy Holy Spirit, both to will and to do.

Teach us, too, we pray Thee, to know how the flesh can be conquered and its power broken. In the death of Thy beloved Son our old man has been crucified: may we count all things but loss to be made conformable to that

death, and have the old nature kept in the place of death. We do yield ourselves to the lead and rule of Thy Holy Spirit. We do believe that through the Spirit Christ is our life, so that instead of the life of effort and work, an entirely new life works within us. Our Father—in faith we give up all to Thy Spirit to be our life in us. Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 27

The Spirit through Faith.

'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse, that upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus ; we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.'Gal.3:13,14.

THE word faith is used the first time in Scripture in connection with Abraham. His highest praise, the secret of his strength for obedience, and what made him so pleasing to God, that he believed God; and so he became the Father of all them that believe, and the great example of the blessing which the Divine favour sows, and the path in which it comes. Just as God proved Himself to Abraham the God who quickens the dead, He does to us too, in fuller measure, in giving us the Spirit of His own Divine to dwell in us. And just as this quickening power came to Abraham through faith, so the blessing of Abraham, as now made manifest in Christ, even the promise of the Spirit, is made ours by faith. All the lessons of Abraham's life centre in this: ` We receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.' If we want to know what the Faith is through which the Spirit is received, how that faith comes and grows, we must study what God has taught us of it in Abraham's story.

In Abraham's life we see what faith is: the spiritual sense by which man recognises and accepts the revelation of his God, a spiritual sense called forth and awakened by that revelation. It was because God had chosen Abraham, and determined to reveal Himself, that Abraham became a man of faith. Each new revelation was an act of the Divine Will; it is the Divine Will, and the revelation in which it carries out its purpose, that is the cause and the life of faith. The more distinct the revelation or contact with God, the deeper is faith stirred in the soul. Paul speaks of 'trust in the Living God:' it is only as the Living One, in the quickening power of the Divine Life, draws nigh and touches the soul, that living faith will be called forth. Faith is not an independent act, by which in our own strength we take what God says. Nor is it an entirely passive state, in which we only suffer God to do to us what He will. But it is that receptivity of soul in which, as God comes near, and as His living Power speaks to us and touches us, we yield ourselves and accept His word and His working.

It is thus very evident that faith has two things to deal with: first the Presence, and then the Word of the Lord. It is only the Living Presence that makes the Living Word; so the Kingdom comes not in word only, but in power. It is on this account that there is so much reading and preaching of the word that bears so little fruit; so much straining and praying for faith, with so little result. Men deal with the word more than with the Living God. Faith has very truly been defined as `Taking God at His word.' With many this has only meant, taking the word as God's; they did not see the force of the thought, Taking God at His word. A key or a door handle has no value until I use it for the lock and the door I want to open; it is alone in direct and living contact with God Himself that the word can work effectually and open the heart for God. Faith takes God at His word; it can only do this when and as He gives Himself. I may have in God's book all His precious promises most clear and full; I may have learnt perfectly to understand how I have but to trust the promise to have it fulfilled; and yet utterly fail to find the longed for blessing. The Faith that enters on the inheritance is the attitude of soul which waits for God Himself, first to speak His word to me, and then to do the thing which He hath spoken. Faith is fellowship with God; faith is surrender to God; the impression made by His drawing nigh, the possession He takes of the soul by His word,

holding and preparing it for His work. When once it has been awakened, it watches for every appearing of the Divine Will; it listens for and accepts ever indication of the Divine Presence; it looks for and expects the fulfilment of every Divine Promise.

Such was the faith through which Abraham inherited the promises. Such is the faith by which the blessing of Abraham comes upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, and by which we thus receive the promise of the Spirit. In all our study of the work of the Holy Spirit, and of the way in which He comes, from His first sealing us, to His full indwelling and streaming forth, let us hold fast this word: ' We receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.' Whether the believer be striving for the full consciousness that the Spirit dwells within, for a deeper assurance of His shedding abroad of God's love in the heart, for a larger growth of all His fruits, for the clearer experience of His guiding into all truth, or for the induement of power to labour and to bless, let him remember that the law of faith, on which the whole economy of grace is grounded, here demands its fullest application: ` According to your faith be it unto you.' ` We receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.' Let us seek for Abraham's blessing in Abraham's faith.

Let, in this matter, our faith begin where his began: in meeting God and waiting on God. 'The Lord appeared unto Abraham . . . . And Abraham fell on his face: and God talked with him: Let us look up to our God and Father as the Living God, who Himself, by His Omnipotent Quickening Power,to do this wonderful thing for us : to fill us with His Holy Spirit. The blessing He has for us is the same He gave to Abraham, but only larger, fuller, and more wonderful. To Abraham, both when his own was now as dead, and later on, when his son already bound on the altar, the prey of death, He came as the Life - giving God. ` He believed who quickeneth the dead.' ` He offered up Isaac accounting God able to raise him up.' To us He comes, offering to fill spirit, soul, and body the power of a Divine life, through the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. Let us be like Abraham. Looking at the promise of God, he wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform.' Let us have our souls filled with the faith of Him who has promised, our hearts fixed on Him who is able to perform : it is faith in God opens the heart for God, and prepares to submit to and receive His Divine working. God waits on us to fill us with His Spirit: oh, let us wait on Him. God must do it all with a Divine doing, most mightily and most blessed: let us wait on Him. To read and think, to long and pray, to consecrate ourselves and grasp the promise, to hold fast the blessed truth that the Spirit dwells within us; all this is good in its place, but does not, bring the blessing. The one thing needful is, to have the heart filled with faith in the Living God; in that faith to abide in living contact with Him, in that faith to wait, and worship, and work, as in His Holy Presence. In such fellowship with God, the Holy Spirit fills the heart.

When we have taken up this position, let us keep in it ; we are then in the right state for the Spirit, in such measure as He already has had access to us, further revealing what God has prepared for us.' As we then think of some special manifestation of the Spirit, of which the conviction of need has been wrought, or go to the promises of the word to be led into all the Will of God concernig the life of the Spirit in us, we shall be kept in that humbling sense of dependence out of which childlike trust is most surely begotten. We shall be preserved from that life of strain and effort which has so often led to failure, because in the very attempt to serve God in the Spirit we were having or seeking confidence in the flesh, in something we felt, or did, or wished to do. The deep undertone of our life, in listening to God's word, or in asking God to listen to us, in silent meditation or public worship, in work for God or daily business, will be the assurance that overpowers every other certainty: `How much more will the Heavenly Father give,' has He given, and will He always be giving, `the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.'

Such a faith will not be without its trials. Isaac, the God-given, faith-accepted life of Isaac, had to be given up to

death, that it might be received back in resurrection-type, as life from the dead. The God-given experience of the Spirit's working many a time passes away, and leaves the soul apparently dull and dead. This is only until double lesson has been fully learnt; that a faith can rejoice in a Living God, even when all feeling and experience appear to contradict the promise ; and that the Divine life only enters as the life of the flesh is given to the death. The life of Crist is revealed as His death works in us, and as in weakness and nothingness we look to Him. We receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. As faith grows larger and broader, the receiving of promised Spirit will be fuller and deeper. Each new revelation of God to Abraham made his faith stronger and his acquaintance with God more intimate. When his God drew near, he knew what to expect; he knew to trust Him even in the most unlikely appearances, when asking the death of his son. It is the faith that waits every day on the Living God to reveal Himself ; the faith that in increasing tenderness of ear and readiness of service yields fully to Him and His Presence; the faith that knows that only as He wills to reveal Himself can the blessing come, but that because He always does love to reveal Himself, it will surely come;-- this faith receives the promise of the Spirit.

It was in God's Presence that this faith was wakened and strengthened in Abraham and the saints of old. It was in Jesus' Presence on earth that unbelief was cast out, and that little faith became strong. It was in the Presence of the glorified One that faith received the blessing of Pentecost. The Throne of God is now opened to us in Christ; it is become the Throne of God and the Lamb: as we tarry in humble worship, and walk in loving service before the Throne, the river of the water of life that flows from under it will flow into us, and through us, and out of us. ` He that believeth, rivers of water shall flow out of him.'

Ever-blessed God! who dost in Thy Divine Love and Power reveal Thyself to each of Thy children as far as he can possibly bear it, increase within us, we pray Thee, the faith through which alone we can know or receive Thee. Whether Thou comest as the Almighty, or the Redeeming, or the Indwelling God, it is ever faith Thou seekest, and according to faith we receive. O Father! convince us deeply that we have just as much of the Spirit as we have faith.

Our Holy God! we know that it is Thy Presence wakens and works the faith in the soul that yields to Thee. Draw us mightily, we pray Thee, yea, resistibly into Thy Holy Presence, and keep us waiting there. Oh, deliver us from the terrible fascination of world and flesh, that Thy Divine Glory may be our all-absorbing desire, and our whole heart emptied to receive the Holy Spirit's revelation of Christ within. We desire to take Thy words, and let them dwell richly in us. We desire in stillness of soul to be silent unto God and wait for Him; to trust and believe that the Father hast given us His Spirit within us, and is in secret working to reveal His Son. O God! we do live the life of faith ; we do believe in the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 28

Walking by the Spirit.

Walk by the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. They that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh, with the passions and lusts thereof. If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk.'--Gal.5:16, 24, 25,

'IF we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us walk.' These words suggest to us very clearly the -difference, between the sickly and the healthy Christian life. In the former the Christian is content to 'live by the Spirit;' he is satisfied with knowing that he has the new life; but be does not'walk by the Spirit.' The true believer, on the contrary, is not content without having his whole walk and conversation in the power of the Spirit. He walks by the Spirit, and so does not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

As the Christian strives thus to walk worthy of God and well-pleasing to Him in all things, he is often sorely troubled at the power of sin, and asks what the cause may be that he so often fails in conquering it. The answer to this question he ordinarily finds in his want of faith or faithfulness, in his natural feebleness or the mighty power of Satan. Alas! if he rests content with this solution. It is well for him if he press on to find the deeper reason why all these things, from which Christ secured deliverance for him, still can overcome. One of the deepest secrets of the Christian life is the knowledge that the one great power that keeps the Spirit of God from ruling, that the last enemy that must yield to Him, is the flesh. He that knows what the flesh is, how it works and how it must be dealt with, will be conqueror.

We know how it was on account of their ignorance of this that the Galatians so sadly failed. It was this led them to attempt to perfect in the flesh what was begun in the Spirit (3: 3). It was this made them a prey to those who desired 'to make a fair show in the flesh' that they might 'glory in the flesh' (6:12, 13). They knew not how incorrigibly corrupt the flesh was. They knew not that, as sinful as our nature is when fulfilling its own lusts, as sinful is it when making 'a fair show in the flesh;' it apparently yields itself to the service of God, and undertakes to perfect what the Spirit had begun. Because they knew not this, they were unable to check the flesh in its passions and lusts; these obtained the victory over them, so that they did what they did not wish. They knew not that, as long as the flesh, self-effort, and selfwill had any influence in serving God, it would remain strong to serve sin, and that the only way to render it impotent to do evil was to render it impotent in its attempts to do good.

It is to discover the truth of God concerning the flesh, both in its service of God and of sin, that this Epistle was written. Paul wants to teach then how the Spirit,--and the Spirit alone, is the power of the Christian life, and how this cannot be except as the flesh, with all that it means, is utterly and entirely set aside. And in answer to the question how this can be, he gives the wonderful answer which is one of the central thoughts of God's revelation. The crucifixion and death of Christ is the revelation not only of an atonement for sin, but of a power which frees from the actual dominion of sin, as it is rooted in the flesh. When Paul in the midst of his teaching about the walk in the Spirit (16-26) tells us, 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts,' he tells us what the only way is in which deliverance from the flesh is to be found. To understand this word, 'crucified. the flesh,' and abide in it, is the secret of walking not after the flesh but after the Spirit. Let each one who longs to

walk by the Spirit try to enter into its meaning.

' The flesh'---in Scripture this expression means the whole of our human nature in its present condition under the power of sin. It includes our whole being, spirit, soul, and body. After the fall, God said, 'man is flesh' (Gen.6:3). All his powers, intellect, emotions, will,--all are under the power of the flesh. Scripture speaks of the will of the flesh of the mind of the flesh (fleshly mind), of the passions and lusts of the flesh. It tells us that in our flesh dwelleth no good: the mind of the flesh is at enmity against God. On this ground it teaches that nothing that is of the flesh, that the fleshly mind or will thinks or does, however fair the show it makes, and however much men may glory in it, can have any value in the sight of God. It warns us that our greatest danger in religion, the cause of our feebleness and failure, is our having confidence in the flesh, its wisdom and its work. It tells us that, to be pleasing to God, this flesh, with its self-will and self-effort, must entirely be dispossessed, to make way for the willing and the working of Another, even the Spirit of God. And that the only way to be made free from the power of the flesh, and have it put out of -the way, is to have it crucified and given over to the death.

'They that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh.' Men often speak of crucifying the flesh as a thing that has to be done. Scripture always speaks of it as a thing that has been done, an accomplished fact. 'Knowing, this, that our old man was crucified with Him.' 'I have been crucified with Christ.' ' They that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh.' ' The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' What Christ, through the Eternal Spirit, did on the cross, He did not as an individual, but in the name of that human nature which, as its Head, He had taken upon Himself. Every one who accepts of Christ receives Him as the Crucified One, receives not only the merit, but the power of His crucifixion, is united and identified with Him, and is called on intelligently and voluntarily to realize and maintain that identification. ' They that are of Christ Jesus' have, in virtue of their accepting the crucified Christ as their life, given up their flesh to that cross which is of the very essence of the person and character of Christ as He now lives in heaven; they ' have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts.'

But what does this mean: 'They have crucified the flesh'? Some are content with the general truth: the cross takes away the curse which there was on the flesh. Others think of causing the flesh pain and suffering, of the duty of denying and mortifying it. Others, again, of the moral influence the thought of the cross will exercise. In each of these views there is an element of truth. But if they are to be realized in power, we must go to the rootthought: to crucify the flesh is, to give it over to the curse. The Cross and the Curse are inseparable (Deut.21: 2 3 ; Gal.3:13). To say, ' Our old man has been crucified with Him,' ' I have been crucified with Christ,, means something very solemn and awful. It means this: I have seen that my old nature,myself, deserves the curse; that there is no way of getting rid of it but by death: I voluntarily give it to the death. I have accepted as my life the Christ who came to give Himself, His flesh, to the cursed death of the cross; who received His new life alone owing to that death and in virtue of it: I give my old man, my flesh, self, with its will and work, as a sinful, accursed thing, to the cross. It is nailed there: in Christ I am dead to it, and free from it. It is not yet dead ; but day by day in union with Christ will I keep it there, making dead, as they still seek to rise up, every one of its members and deeds in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The power of this truth depends upon its being known, accepted, and acted on. If I only know the cross in its Substitution, but not, as Paul gloried in it, in its Fellowship (Gal. 6:14), never can experience its power to sanctify. As the blessed truth of its Fellowship dawns upon me, I see how by faith I enter into and live in spiritual communion with that Jesus who, as my Head and Leader, made and proved the cross the only ladder to the Throne. This spiritual union, maintained by faith, becomes a moral one. I have the same mind or disposition that was in Christ Jesus. I regard the flesh as sinful, and only fit for the curse. I accept the cross, with its death to what is flesh, secured to me in Jesus, as the only way to become free from the power of self, and to walk in the new life

by the Spirit of Christ.

The way in which this faith in the power of the cross acts, as at once the revelation and the removal of the curse and the power of the flesh, is very simple, and yet very solemn. I begin to understand that my one danger in living by the Spirit is yielding to the flesh or self in its attempt to serve God. I see that it renders the cross of Christ of none effect. (1 Cor.1:17 ; Gal.3:3, 5:12, 13 ; Phil. 3: 3, 4 ; Col.2:18-23.) 1 see how all that was of man and nature, of law and human effort, was for ever judged of God on Calvary. There flesh proved that, with all its wisdom and all its religion, it hated and rejected the Son of God. There God proved how the only way to deliver from the flesh was to give it to death as an accursed thing. I begin to understand that the one thing I need is: to look upon the flesh as God does; to accept of the death warrant the cross brings to everything in me that is of the flesh; to look upon it, and all that comes from it, as an accursed thing. As this habit of soul grows on me, I learn to fear nothing so much as myself. I tremble at the thought of allowing the flesh, my natural mind and will, to usurp the place of the Holy Spirit. My whole posture towards Christ is that of lowly fear, in the consciousness of having within me that accursed thing that is ever ready, as an angel of light, to intrude itself in the Holiest of all, and lead me astray to serve God, not in the Spirit of Christ, but in the power that is of nature. It is in,, such a lowly fear that the believer is taught to believe fully the need, but also the provision, of the Holy Spirit to take entirely the place which the flesh once had, and day by day to glory in the cross, of which he can say, 'By it I have been crucified to the world.'

We often seek for the cause of failure in the Christian life. We often think that because we are sound on what the Galatians did not understand,-justification by faith alone,their danger was not ours. Oh that we knew to what an extent we have allowed the flesh to work in our religion! Let us pray God for grace to know it as our bitterest enemy, and the enemy of Christ. Free grace does not only mean the pardon of sin ; it means the power of the New Life through the Holy Spirit. Let us consent to what God says of the flesh, and all that comes of it: that it is sinful, condemned, accursed. Let us fear nothing so much as the secret workings of our flesh. Let us accept the teaching of God's word: 'In my flesh dwelleth no good thing;' 'The carnal mind is enmity against God.' Let us ask God to show us how entirely the Spirit must possess us, if we are to be pleasing to Him in all things. Let us believe that as we daily glory in the cross, and, in prayer and obedience, yield the flesh to the death on the cross, Christ will accept our surrender, and will, by His Divine Power, maintain mightily in us the Life of the Spirit. And we shall learn not only to live by the Spirit, but, as those who are made free from the power of the flesh, by its crucifixion, maintained by faith, in very deed to walk by the Spirit.

Blessed God! I beseech Thee to reveal to me the full meaning of what Thy word has been teaching me, that it is as one who has crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts, that I can walk by the Spirit.

0 my Father ! teach me to see that all that is of nature and of self is of the flesh ; that the flesh has been tested by Thee, and found wanting, worthy of nothing but the curse and death. Teach me that my Lord Jesus led the way, and acknowledged the justice of Thy curse, that I too might be willing and have the power to give it up to the cross as an accursed thing. Oh, give me grace day by day greatly to fear before Thee, lest I allow the flesh to intrude into the work of the Spirit, and to grieve Him. And teach me that the Holy Spirit has indeed been given to be the life of my life, and to fill my whole being with the power of the death and the life of my blessed Lord living in me.

Blessed Lord Jesus! who didst send Thy Holy Spirit, to secure the uninterrupted enjoyment of Thy Presence and Thy Saving Power within us, I yield myself to be entirely Thine, to live wholly and only under His leading. I do with my whole heart desire to regard the flesh as crucified and accursed. I solemnly consent to live as a crucified one. Saviour! Thou dost accept my surrender; I trust in Thee to keep me this day walking through the Spirit.

Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 29

The Spirit of Love

The fruit of the Spirit is love.'-Gal 5:.22. 1 beseech you by the love of the Spirit.' -Rom. 15:30. Who also declared unto us your love in the spirit, Col.1:8

Our subject today leads us up into the very centre of the inner sanctuary. We are to think of the Love of the Spirit. We shall have to learn that love is not only one, among others, of the graces of the Spirit, is not only the chief among them, but that the Spirit is indeed nothing less than the Divine Love itself come down to dwell in us, and that we have only so much of the Spirit as we have of Love.

God is a Spirit: God Is Love. In these two words we have the only attempt that Scripture makes to give us, in human language, what may be called a definition of God.' As a Spirit, He has life in Himself, is independent of all around Him, and has power over all to enter into it, to penetrate it with His own life, to communicate Himself to it. It is through the Spirit that God is the Father of Christ, the Father of spirits, that He is the God of creation, that He is the God and Redeemer of man. All life is owing to the Spirit of God. And it is so because God is Love. Within Himself He is Love, as seen in the Father giving all He hath to the Son, and the Son seeking all He has in the Father. In this life of Love between the Father and the Son' the Spirit is the bond of fellowship. The Father is the Loving One, the Fountain; the Son the Beloved One, the great Reservoir of Love, ever receiving and ever giving back; the Spirit the Living Love that makes them one. In Him the Divine Life of Love hath its ceaseless flow and overflowing. It is that same love with which the -Father loves the Son that rests on us and seeks to fill us too, and it is through the Spirit that this Love of God is revealed and communicated to us. In Jesus it was the Spirit that led Him to the work of love for which He was anointed, to preach glad tidings to the poor and deliverance to the captives ; through that same Spirit He offered Himself a sacrifice for us. The Spirit comes to us freighted with all the love of God and of Jesus : the Spirit is the Love of God.

And when that Spirit enters us, His first work is: 'The love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which was given unto us.' What He gives is not only the faith or the experience of how greatly God loves, but something infinitely more glorious. The Love of God, as a spiritual existence, as a Living Power, enters our hearts. It cannot be otherwise, for the Love of God exists in the Spirit; the outpouring of the Spirit is the inpouring of Love. This Love now possesses the heart: that one same Love with which God loves Jesus, and ourselves, and all His children, and which overflows to all the world, is within us, and is, if we know it, and trust it, and give up to it, the power for us to live in too. The Spirit is the Life of the Love of God; the Spirit in us is the Love of God taking up abode within us.

Such is the relation between the Spirit and the Love of God; let us now consider the relation between our spirit and love. We must here again refer to what has been said of man's threefold nature, body, soul, and spirit, as constituted in creation and disorganized by the fall.' We saw how the soul, as the seat of self-consciousness, was to be subject to the spirit, the seat of the God consciousness. And how sin was simply self assertion, the soul refusing the rule of the spirit to gratify itself in the lust of the body. The fruit of that sin was that self ascended the

throne of the soul, to rule there instead of God in the spirit. Selfishness thus became the ruling power in man's life. The self that had refused God His right at once refused fellow-man his due, and the terrible story of sin in the world is simply the history of the origin, the growth, the power, the reign of self. And it is only when the original order is restored when the soul gives the spirit the precedence it claims, and self is denied to make way for God, that selfishness will be conquered, and love toward our brother flow from love toward God. In other words, as the renewed spirit becomes the abode of the Spirit of God and His love, and as the regenerate man yields himself to let the Spirit have sole sway, that love will again become our life and our joy. To every disciple the Master says here again, 'Let him deny self and follow me.' Many a one has sought in vain to follow Jesus in His life of love, and could not, because he neglected what was so indispensable denying self. Self following Jesus always fails, because it cannot love as He loves.

If we understand this, we are prepared to admit the claim that Jesus makes, and that the world makes too, that our proof of discipleship is to be Love. The change we profess to have undergone is so Divine, the deliverance from the power of self and sin so complete, the indwelling of the Spirit of God's love is so real and true, and the provision made to enable us thus to live so sufficient, that love, or the new commandment, as the fulfilling of the law, ought to be the natural overflow of the new life in every believer. That it is not so is simply another proof of how little believers understand their calling to walk after the Spirit, really to be spiritual men. All the complaints that are continually being made by ourselves, or those around us, of tempers unconquered and of selfishness prevailing, of harsh judgments and unkind words, of the want of a Christlike meekness and patience and gentleness, of the little that is really being done by the majority of Christians in the way of self-sacrifice for the social and religious needs of the perishing around them,-all this is simply the proof that it has not yet been understood that to be a Christian just means to have the Spirit of Christ; just means to have His Love, to have been made by Him a fountain of Love springing up and flowing out in streams of living water. We know not what the Spirit is meant to be in us, because we have not accepted Him for what the Master gave. We are more carnal than spiritual.

It was thus with the Corinthians. In them we see the remarkable phenomenon of a Church, 'in everything enriched in Christ, in all utterance, and all knowledge, coming behind in no gift,'' abounding in everything in faith, and utterance, and knowledge,' and yet so sadly wanting in love. 'Whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal?' The sad spectacle teaches us how, under the first movings of the Holy Spirit, the natural powers of the soul, knowledge, faith, utterance, may be mightily affected, without self yet being entirely surrendered ; and how thus many of the gifts of the Spirit may be seen, while the chief of all, Love, is sadly wanting. It teaches us how to be truly spiritual. It is not enough for the Spirit to take hold of these natural soul-endowments and rouse them to exercise in God's service. Something more is needed. He has entered the soul, that through it He may obtain a fixed and undivided sway in soul and spirit both, that with self deposed God may reign. And the token that self is deposed and that God does reign will be Love ; the surrender and the power to count nothing Life but Love, a life in the love of the Spirit.

Not very different was the state of the Galatians, to whom the words, 'The fruit of the Spirit is Love,' were addressed. Though their error was not that of the Corinthians, boasting of gifts and knowledge, but a seeking after and trusting in carnal observances and ordinances, the result was in both the same-the Spirit's full dominion was not accepted in the inner life of love, and so the flesh ruled in them, causing bitterness and envy and enmity. (Gal.5:15,16, 25, 26.) And even so it is still in much of what bears the name of the Christian Church. On the one hand the trust in gifts and knowledge, in soundness of creed and earnestness of work, on the other the satisfaction in forms and services, leaves the flesh in full vigour, not crucified with Christ, and so the Spirit is not free to work out true holiness or a life in the power of Christ's love. Oh, do let us learn the lesson, and pray God very fervently to teach it to His people, that a Church or a Christian professing to have the Holy Spirit must prove it in the first

place by the exhibition of a Cbristlike love. Both in its gentleness in bearing wrong, and in its life of self-sacrifice to overcome the wrong, and to save all who are under its power, the life of Christ must be repeated in His members. The Spirit is indeed the Love of God come down to us.'

As searching and solemn as this truth is in this aspect, so comforting and encouraging is it in another. The Spirit is the Love of God come down to us. Then we have that love within our reach; it is indeed dwelling within us. Since the day when, in believing, we were sealed with the Holy Ghost, the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts. 'The love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts, through the Holy Ghost which was given unto us.' Though there may have been little to see of it in our lives, though we ourselves have hardly felt or known it, though the blessing has been unrecognised, there it was; with the Holy Spirit came down the Love of God into our hearts; the two could never be separated. And if we would now come to the experience of the blessing, we must just begin by a very simple faith in what the word says. The word is Spiritbreathed, the Divinely-prepared organ through which the Spirit reveals what He is and does. As we take that word as Divine Truth, the Spirit will make it Truth in us. Let us believe that the Holy Spirit, possessor and bearer to us of all God's Love, has been within our heart with all that Love ever since we became God's children. Because the veil of the flesh has never been rent in us, the outstreaming and power of that Love has been but feeble, and hidden from our consciousness. Let us believe that He dwells within us, to reveal as the Power of our Life, the Love of God in our hearts.

In this faith, that the Love-shedding Spirit is within us, let us look up to the Father in earnest prayer, to plead for His mighty working in our inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts, that we may be rooted and grounded in love, that our whole life may have its strength and nourishment in love. As the answer comes, the Spirit will first reveal to us the Love of God, the Love of the Father to Christ as His Love to us, the Love of Christ to us, the same with which the Father loved Him. Through the same Spirit this love then rises and returns to its Source, as our love to God and Christ. And because that Spirit has revealed that same love to all God's children around us, our experience of it as coming from God, or returning up to God, is ever one with love to the brethren. Just as the water descending in rain, and flowing out as fountains or streams, and rising up to heaven again as vapour, is all one, so the Love of God in its threefold form; His Love to us, our love to Him, and the love to each other as brethren. The Love of God is within thee by the Holy Spirit: believe it, and rejoice in it ; yield thyself to it as a Divine fire consuming the sacrifice and lifting it heavenward: exercise and practise it in intercourse with every one on earth. Then thou shalt understand and prove that the Spirit of God is the Love of God.

Blessed Lord Jesus! in holy reverence I bow before Thee as Love Incarnate. The Father's love gave Thee. Thy coming was a mission of Love. Thy whole life was Love; Thy death its Divine seal. The one commandment Thou gavest Thy disciples was Love. Thy one prayer before the throne is that Thy disciples may be one, as Thou with the Father, and that His Love may be in them. The one chief trait of Thy likeness Thou longest to see in us is, that we love even as Thou lovest. The one irresistible proof to the world of Thy Divine mission will be the love of Thy disciples to each other. And the Spirit that comes from Thee to us is the very Spirit of Thy self -sacrificing love, teaching Thy saints to live and die for others, as Thou didst.

Holy Lord Jesus! look upon Thy Church, look upon our hearts. And wherever Thou seest that there is not love like Thine, oh, make haste and deliver Thy saints from all that is still selfish and unloving ' Teach them to yield that self, which cannot love, to the accursed cross, to await the fate it deserves. Teach us to believe that we can love, because the Holy Spirit hath been given us. Teach us to begin to love and serve, to sacrifice self and live for others, that love in action may learn its power, may be increased and perfected. Oh, teach us to believe that because Thou livest in us, Thy love is in us too, and we can love as Thou dost. Lord Jesus, Thou Love of God! Thine own Spirit is within us; oh, let Him break through, and fill our whole life with love. Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 30

The Unity of the Spirit.

'That ye walk with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit.'--Eph.4:1-4.

' Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. . . . All these worketh one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as He will. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body; and were all made to drink of one Spirit.' -1 Cor.12: 4,11,13.

We know how, in the first three chapters of the Ephesians, Paul had set forth the glory of Christ Jesus as the Head of the Church, and the glory of God's grace in the Church as the Body of Christ, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, growing up into an habitation of God through the Spirit, and destined to be filled with all the fulness of God. Having thus lifted the believer to his true place in the heavenlies, with his life hid in Christ, he comes with him down to his life in the earthlies, and, in the second half of the Epistle, teaches how he is to walk worthy of his calling. And the very first lesson he has to give in regard to this life and walk on earth (Eph.4: 1-4) rests on the foundation-truth that the Holy Spirit has united him not only to Christ in heaven, but to Christ's body on earth. The Spirit dwells not only in Christ in heaven and in the believer on earth, but very specially in Christ's body, with all its members; and the full, healthy action of the Spirit can only be found where the right relation exists between the individual and the whole body, as far as he knows or comes into contact with it. His first care in his holy walk must be, therefore, to give diligence that the unity of the Spirit be maintained intact. Where this unity of the one Spirit and one body is fully acknowledged, the cardinal virtue of the Christian life will be lowliness and meekness (vers. 2, 3), in which each would forget and give up self for others; amid all differences and shortcomings, all would forbear one another in love. So the new commandment would be kept, and the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Love sacrificing itself wholly for others, would have free scope to do His blessed work.

The need of such teaching the first Epistle to the Corinthians remarkably illustrates. In that Church there were abundant operations of the workings of the Holy Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit were strikingly manifested, but the graces of the Spirit were remarkably absent. They understood not how there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; how, amid all difference, one and the same Spirit divides to each severally as He will; how all had been baptized in one Spirit into one body, and all made to drink of one Spirit. They knew not the more excellent way, and that the chief of all the gifts of the Spirit is the Love that seeketh not its own, and only finds its life and its happiness in others.

To each believer who would fully yield himself to the leading of the Spirit, as well as to the Church as a whole, in its longings for the experience in power of all that the indwelling of the Spirit implies, the unity of the Spirit is a truth fraught with rich spiritual blessing. In previous writings I have more than once made use of the expression of Pastor Stockmaier: ' Have a deep reverence for the work of the Holy Spirit within thee.' That injunction needs as its complement a second one: Have a deep reverence for the work of the Holy Spirit in thy brother. This is no easy thing: even Christians, in other respects advanced, often fail here. The cause is not difficult to discover. In

our books on education we are taught that the faculty of Discrimination, the observing of differences, is one of the earliest to be developed in children. The power of Combination, or the observing of the harmony that exists amid apparent diversity, is a higher one, and comes later; as the power of Classification, in its highest action, it is only found in true genius. The lesson finds most striking exemplification in the Christian life and Church. It needs but little grace to know where we differ from other Christians or churches, to contend for our views, or to judge their errors in doctrine or conduct. But this indeed is grace, where, amid conduct that tries or grieves us, or teaching that appears to us unscriptural or hurtful, we always give the unity of the Spirit the first place, and have faith in the power of love to maintain the living union amid outward separation.

Keep the unity of the Spirit : such is God's command to every believer. It is the New Commandment, to love one another, in a new shape, tracing the love to the Spirit in which it has its life. If you would obey the command, note carefully that it is the unity of the Spirit. There is a unity of creed or custom, of church or choice, in which the bond is more of the flesh than of the Spirit. Would you keep the unity of the Spirit, remember the following things.

Seek to know that in thyself in which the unity is to find its power of attachment and of victory. There is much in thee that is of self and of the flesh, and that can take part in a unity that is of this earth, but that will greatly hinder the unity of the Spirit. Confess that it is in no power or love of thine own that thou canst love; all that is of thyself is selfish, and reaches not to the true unity of the Spirit. Be very humble in the thought that it is only what is of God in thee that can ever unite with what appears displeasing to thyself. Be very joyful in the thought that there is indeed that in thee which can conquer self, and love even what seems unloving.

Study also to know and prize highly that in thy brother with which thou art to be united. As in thyself, so there is in him, but a little beginning, a hidden seed of the Divine life, surrounded by much that is yet carnal, and often is very trying and displeasing. It needs a heart very humble in the knowledge of how unworthy thou thyself art, and very loving in the readiness to excuse thy brother,for so did Jesus in the last night: 'the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak ' 'to look persistently at what there is in the brother of the image and Spirit of the Father. Estimate him not by what he is in himself, but by what he is in Christ, and as thou feelest how the same life and Spirit, which thou owest to free grace, is in him too, the unity of the Spirit will triumph over the difference and dislike of the flesh. The Spirit in thee, acknowledging and meeting the Spirit in thy brother, will bind thee in the unity of a life that is from above.

Keep this unity of the Spirit in the active exercise of fellowship. The bond between the members of my body is most living and real, maintained by the circulation of the blood and the life it carries. 'In one Spirit we were all baptized into one body! 'There is one body and one Spirit! The inner union of life must find expression and be strengthened in the manifested communion of love. Cultivate intercourse not only with those who are of one way of thinking and worshipping with thyself, lest the unity be more in the flesh than the Spirit. Study in all thy thoughts and judgments of other believers to exercise the love that thinketh no evil. Never say an unkind word of a child of God, as little as of others. Love every believer, not for the sake of what in him is in sympathy with thee or pleasing to thee, but for the sake of the Spirit of the Father which there is in him. Give thyself expressly and of set purpose to love and labour for God's children within thy reach, who through ignorance, or feebleness, or waywardness, know not that they have the Spirit, or are grieving Him. The work of the Spirit is to build up an habitation for God; yield thyself to the Spirit in thee to do the work. Recognise thy dependence upon the fellowship of the Spirit. in thy brother, and his dependence upon thee, and seek thy growth and his in the unity of love.

Take thy part in the united intercession that rises up to God for the unity of His Church. Take up and continue the intercession of the Great High Priest for all who believe, 'that they may be one.' The Church is one in the life of

Christ and the love of the Spirit. It is, alas ! not one in the manifested unity of the Spirit. Hence the need of the command: Keep the unity. Plead with God for the mighty workings of His Spirit in all lands and churches and circles of believers. When the tide is low, each little pool along the shore with its inhabitants is separated from the other by a rocky barrier. As the tide rises, the barriers are flooded over, and all meet in one great ocean. So it will be with the Church of Christ. As the Spirit of God comes, according to the promise, as floods upon the dry ground, each will know the power in himself and in others, and self disappear as the Spirit is known and honoured.

And how is this wondrous change to be brought about, and the time hastened that the prayer be fulfilled, 'that they all may be one, that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved me ' ? Let each of us begin with himself. Resolve even now, beloved child of God, that this shall be the one mark of your life, the proof of your sonship, the having and knowing the Indwelling Spirit. If you are to unite, not with what pleases you, or is in harmony with your way of thinking and acting, but with what the Spirit in you sees and seeks in others, you must have given yourself entirely up to His way of thinking and acting. And if you are to do this, He must have the mastery of your whole being. You need to abide in the living and neverceasing consciousness that He dwelleth within you. You need to pray unceasingly that the Father may grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man. It is in the faith of the Triune God, the Father giving the Spirit in the name of the Son, and the Spirit dwelling within you; it is in this faith brought into adoring exercise at the footstool of God's throne ; it is in direct contact and fellowship with the Father and the Son, that the Spirit will take full possession, and pervade your entire being. The fuller His indwelling and the mightier His working is, the more truly spiritual your being becomes, the more will self sink away, and the Spirit of Christ use you in building up and binding together believers into an habitation of God, Christ's Spirit will be in you the holy anointing, the oil of consecration, to set you apart and fit you to be, as Christ was, a messenger of the Father's love. In the humility and gentleness of daily life, in the kindliness and forbearance of love amid all the differences and difficulties in the Church, in the warm-hearted sympathy and self-sacrifice that goes out to find and help all who need help, the Spirit in you will prove that He belongs to all the members of the body as much as to you, and that through you His love reaches out to all around to teach and to bless.

Blessed Lord Jesus ! in Thy last night on earth Thy one prayer for Thy disciples was, 'Holy Father, keep them, that they may be one.' Thy one desire was to see them a united flock, all gathered and kept together in the One Almighty Hand of Love. Lord Jesus! now Thou art on the Throne, we come to Thee with the same plea: Oh, keep us, that we may be one ! pray for us, Thou Great High Priest, that we may be made perfect in one, that the world may know that the Father hath loved us, as He loved Thee.

Blessed Lord! we thank Thee for the tokens that Thou art wakening in Thy Church the desire for the manifestation to the world of the unity of Thy people. Grant, we pray Thee, to this end the mighty workings of Thy Holy Spirit. May every believer know the Spirit that is in him, and that is in his brother, and in all lowliness and love keep the unity of the Spirit with those with whom he comes into contact. May all the leaders and guides of Thy Church be enlightened from above, that the unity of the Spirit may be more to them than all human bonds of union in creed or church order. May all who have put on the Lord Jesus above all things put on love, the bond of perfectness.

Lord Jesus! we do beseech Thee, draw Thy people in united prayer to the footstool of Thy Throne of Glory, whence Thou givest Thy Spirit to reveal Thy presence to each as present in all. Oh, fill us with Thy Spirit, and we shall be one I one Spirit and one Body. Amen.

The Spirit of Christ

by Andrew Murray

Chapter 31

Filled With the Spirit.

'Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another.'-- Eph 5:18

THESE words are a command. They enjoin upon us, not what the state of apostles or ministers ought to be, but what should be the ordinary consistent experience of every true-hearted believer. It is the privilege every child of God may claim from his Father, to be filled with the Spirit. Nothing less will enable him to live the life he has been redeemed for, abiding in Christ, keeping His commandments, and bearing much fruit. And yet, how little this command has been counted among those which all ought to keep! How little it has been thought possible or reasonable that all should be expected to keep it !

One reason of this is undoubtedly that the words have been wrongly understood. Because with the day of Pentecost, and on more than one subsequent occasion, the being filled with the Spirit was accompanied with the manifest enthusiasm of a supernatural joy and power, such a state has been looked on as one of excitement and strain, quite inconsistent with the quiet course of ordinary life. The suddenness and the strength and the outward manifestation of the Divine impulse were so linked with the idea of being filled with the Spirit, that it was thought to be something for special occasions, a blessing only possible to a very few. Christians felt as if they could not venture, as if they did not need, to fix their hopes so high ; as if, were the blessing given to them, it would be impossible in their circumstances to maintain or to manifest it.

The message I have to bring today is that the command is indeed for every believer, and that, as wide as the precept, is the promise and the power too. May God give us grace, that our meditation on this His Word may waken in the heart of every reader, not only strong desire but the firm assurance that the privilege is meant for him, that the way is not too hard, that the blessing will in very deed yet become his own.

In a country like South Africa, where we often suffer from drought, we find two sorts of dams or reservoirs made for catching up and storing water. On some farms you have a fountain, but with a stream too weak to irrigate with. There a reservoir is made for collecting the water, and the filling of the reservoir is the result of the gentle, quiet inflow from the fountain day and night. In other cases, again,, the farm has no fountain at all ; the reservoir is built in the bed of a stream or in a hollow where, when rain falls, the water can be collected. In such a place, the filling of the reservoir, with a heavy fall of rain, is often the work of a very few hours, and is accompanied with a rush and violence not free from danger. The noiseless supply of the former farm is, at the same time, the surer, because the supply, though apparently feeble, is permanent; in tracts where the rainfall is uncertain, a reservoir may stand empty for months or years.

There is the same difference in the way in which the fulness of the Spirit comes. On the day of Pentecost, at times when new beginnings are made, in the outpouring of the Spirit of conversion in heathen lands, or of revival among Christian people, suddenly, mightily, manifestly, men are filled with the Holy Ghost. In the enthusiasm and the joy of the newly found salvation, the power of the Spirit is undeniably present. And yet, for those who

receive it thus, there are special dangers. The blessing is often too much dependent on the fellowship with others, or extends only to the upper and more easily reached currents of the soul's life: the sudden is often the superficial; the depths of the will and the inner life have not been reached. Other Christians there are who have never been partakers of any such marked experience, and in whom, nevertheless, the fulness of the Spirit is no less distinctly seen in the deep and intense devotion to Jesus, in a walk in the light of His countenance and the consciousness of His Holy presence, in the blamelessness of a life of simple trust and obedience, and in the humility of a self-sacrificing love to all around. They have their types in what Barnabas was: 'a son of consolation, a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost.'

And which of these is now the true way of being filled with the Spirit ? The answer is easy. There are farms on which both the above-named reservoirs are to be found, auxiliary to each other. There are even reservoirs, where the situation is favourable, in which both the modes of filling are made use of. The regular, quiet, daily inflowing keeps them supplied in time of great drought; in time of rain they are ready to receive and store up large supplies. There are Christians who are not content but with special mighty visitations: the rushing mighty wind, floods outpoured, and the baptism of fire-these are their symbols. There are others to whom the fountain springing up from within, and quietly streaming forth, appears the true type of the Spirit's work. Happy they who can recognise God in both, and hold themselves always ready to be blessed in whichever way He comes.

And what are now the conditions of this fulness of the Spirit? God's word has one answer-faith. It is faith alone that sees and receives the Invisible, that sees and receives God Himself. The cleansing from sin and the loving surrender to obedience, which were the conditions of the first reception of the Spirit, are the fruit of the faith that saw what sin was, and what the blood, and what the will and the love of God. Of these we do not speak here again. Our text is for believers who have been faithful in their seeking to obey, and yet have not what they long for. By faith they must specially see what there is that needs to be cast out. All filling needs emptying. I do not here speak of the cleansing out of sin, and the surrender to full obedience. This is always the first essential. But I speak of believers who in this think they have done what God demands, and yet fail of the blessing. The first condition of all filling is emptiness. What is a reservoir but a great hollow, a great emptiness prepared, waiting, thirsting, crying for the water to come ? Any true abiding fulness Of the Spirit is preceded by emptying. ' I sought the blessing long and earnestly,' said one, 'and I wondered why it did not come. At last I found it was because there was no room in my heart to receive it.' In such emptying out there are various elements. A deep dissatisfaction with the religion we have hitherto had. A deep consciousness of how much there has been of the wisdom and the work of the flesh in it. A discovery, and confession, and giving up of all in life that had been kept in our own hands and management, in which self had hitherto reigned, of all in which we had not thought it necessary or possible that Jesus should directly be consulted and pleased. A deep conviction of impotence and utter helplessness to grasp or seize what is offered. A surrender, in poverty of spirit to wait on the Lord in His great mercy and power, 'according to the riches of His glory, to strengthen us mightily by His Spirit in the inner man.' A great longing, thirsting, waiting, crying, a praying without ceasing for the Father to fulfil His promise in us, and take full possession of us within. Such an emptying is on the way to the filling.

With this is needed the believing which accepts, which receives, which holds the gift. It is through faith in Christ and in the Father that the Divine fulness will flow into us. Of the same Ephesians, to whom the command is given, 'Be filled with the Spirit,' Paul had said, 'In Christ, having believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.' The command refers to what they had already received: the fountain was within them ; it had to be opened up, and way made for it; it would spring up and fill their being. And yet not as if this was in their own power: Jesus had said, ' He that believeth, keeps believing in me, rivers of living water shall flow out of him.' The fulness of the Spirit is so truly in Jesus, the receiving out of Him must so really be in the unbroken continuity of a real life-fellowship, the ceaseless inflow of the sap from Him the living Vine must so distinctly be met by the

ceaseless recipiency of a simple faith, that the upspringing of the fountain within can only be in the dependence on Jesus above. It is by the faith of Jesus, whose baptism with the Spirit has as distinct a commencement as His cleansing with the blood, but is also maintained by, as continuous a renewal, that the inflow will grow ever stronger until it comes to the overflowing.

And yet the faith in Jesus, and the hourly and evergrowing upspringing of the Spirit, will not dispense with faith in the Father's special gift and the prayer for His special renewed fulfilment of His promise. For these same Ephesians, who had thus the Spirit within them as the earnest of their inheritance, Paul prays to the Father ' that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man.' The verbs both denote not a gradual work, but an act, something done at once. The expression, 'according to the riches of His glory,' indicates something which is to be a great exhibition of the Divine love and power, something very special and Divine. They had the Spirit indwelling. He prayed for them that the direct interposition of the Father might give them such mighty workings of the Spirit, such a fulness of the Spirit, that the indwelling of Christ, and a life in the love that passeth knowledge, and a being filled with the fulness of God, might be their blessed personal experience. When the flood came of old, the windows of heaven above, and the fountains of the great deep beneath, were together opened. It is still so in the fulfilment of the promise of the Spirit: 'I will pour floods upon the dry ground.' The deeper and clearer the faith in the Indwelling Spirit, and the simpler the waiting on Him, the more abundant will be the renewed down-coming of the Spirit from the heart of the Father direct into the heart of His waiting child.

There is one more aspect in which it is essential to remember that this fulness comes to faith. God loves when He appears to come in lowly and unlikely appearance, to clothe Himself in the garment of humility which He wants His children to love and wear. ' The Kingdom of Heaven is like a seed:' only faith can know what glory there is in its littleness. Thus was the dwelling of the Son on earth; thus is the indwelling of the Spirit in the heart. He asks to be believed in, when nothing is seen or felt. Believe that the fountain that springs up and flows forth in living streams is within, even when all appears dry. Take time to retire into the inner chamber of the heart, and thence send up praise and offer worship to God in the assurance of the Holy Ghost within. Take time to be still and realise, and let the Spirit Himself fill thy spirit with this most spiritual and heavenly of all truths-that He dwells within thee. Not in the thoughts or feelings first, but in the life, deeper than where we can see and feel, is His temple, His hidden dwellingplace. When once faith knows that it hath what it has asked, it can afford to be patient, and can abound in thanksgiving even where the flesh would murmur. It can trust the Unseen Jesus and the Hidden Spirit. It can believe in that little and unlikely seed, the smallest of all the seeds. It can trust and give glory to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all it can think, and can mightily strengthen in the inner man, just when all appears feeble and ready to faint. Believer! expect not the fulness of the Spirit in the way which thy human reasoning deviseth, but even as was the coming of the Son of God without form or comeliness, in a way that is folly to human wisdom. Expect the Divine Strength in great weakness; become a fool to receive the Divine wisdom which the Spirit teacheth; be willing to be nothing, because God chooseth the things that are not to bring to nought the things that are. So shalt thou learn not to glory in the flesh, but to glory in the Lord. And in the deep joy of a life of daily obedience and childlike simplicity, thou shalt know what it is to be filled with the Spirit.

0 my God ! Thy fulness of love and of glory is like a boundless ocean-infinite and inconceivable. I bless Thee that, in revealing Thy Son, it pleased Thee that all the fulness of the Godhead should dwell in Him bodily, that in Him we might see that fulness in human life and weakness. I bless Thee that His Church on earth is even now, in all its weakness, His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all; that in Him we are made full; that by the mighty working of Thy Spirit, and the indwelling of Thy Son, and the knowledge of Thy love, we may be filled to all the fulness of God.

Blessed Father! I thank Thee that the Holy Spirit is to us the bearer of the Fulness of Jesus, and that in being filled with the Spirit we are made full with that Fulness. I thank thee that there, have been men on earth since Pentecost, not a few, of whom Thou hast seen that they were full of the Holy Ghost. 0 my God ! make me full. Let the Holy Spirit take and keep possession of my deepest, inmost life. Let Thy Spirit fill my spirit.

Let thence the fountain flow through all the soul's affections and powers. Let it flow over and flow out through my lips, speaking Thy praise and love. Let the very body, by the quickening and sanctifying energy of the Spirit, be Thy temple, full of the Life Divine. Lord my God! I believe Thou hearest me. Thou hast given it me-; I accept it as mine.

Oh, grant that throughout Thy Church the Fulness of the Spirit may be sought and found, may be known and proved. Lord Jesus our glorified King, oh, let Thy Church be full of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

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Working for God

by Andrew Murray

INTRODUCTION

The object of this little book is first of all to remind all Christian workers of the greatness and the glory of the work in which God gives a share. It is nothing less than that work of bringing men back to their God, at which God finds His highest glory and blessedness. As we see that it is God's own work we have to work out, that He works it through us, that in our doing it His glory rests on us and we glorify Him, we shall count it our joy to give ourselves to live only and wholly for it.

The aim of the book at the same time is to help those who complain, and perhaps do not even know to complain, that they are apparently labouring in vain, to find out what may be the cause of so much failure. God's work must be done in God's way, and in God's power. It is spiritual work, to be done by spiritual men, in the power of the Spirit. The clearer our insight into, and the more complete our submission to, God's laws of work, the surer and the richer will be our joy and our reward in it.

Along with this I have had in view the great number of Christians who practically take no real part in the service of their Lord. They have never understood that the chief characteristic of the Divine life in God and Christ is love and its work of blessing men. The Divine life in us can show itself in no other way. I have tried to show that it is God's will that every believer without exception, whatever be his position in life, gives himself wholly to live and work for God.

I have also written in the hope that some, who have the training of others in Christian life and work, may find thoughts that will be of use to them in teaching the imperative duty, the urgent need, the Divine blessedness of a life given to God's service, and to waken within the consciousness of the power that works in them, even the Spirit and power of Christ Himself.

To the great host of workers in Church and Chapel, in Mission-Hall and Open-Air, in Day and Sunday Schools, in Endeavour Societies, in Y. M. and Y. W. and Students' Associations, and all the various forms of the ministry of love throughout the world, I lovingly offer these meditations, with the fervent prayer that God, the Great Worker, may make us true Fellow-Workers with Himself.

ANDREW MURRAY.

Wellington, *February*, 1901.

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

I

Waiting and Working

'They that wait upon the Lord shall *renew their strength*. Neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, which worketh for him that *waiteth for Him*.'—Isa. 40:31, 64:4.

Here we have two texts in which the connection between waiting and working is made clear. In the first we see that waiting brings the needed strength for working—that it fits for joyful and unwearied work. 'They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up on eagles' wings; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint.' Waiting on God has its value in this: it makes us strong in work for God. The second reveals the secret of this strength. 'God worketh for Him that waiteth for Him.' The waiting on God secures the working of God for us and in us, out of which our work must spring. The two passages teach the great lesson, that as waiting on God lies at the root of all true working for God, so working for God must be the fruit of all true waiting on Him. Our great need is to hold the two sides of the truth in perfect conjunction and harmony.

There are some who say they wait upon God, but who do not work for Him. For this there may be various reasons. Here is one who confounds true waiting on God (in living direct intercourse with Him as the Living One), and the devotion to Him of the energy of the whole being, with the slothful, helpless waiting that excuses itself from all work until God, by some special impulse, has made work easy. Here is another who waits on God more truly, regarding it as one of the highest exercises of the Christian life, and yet has never understood that at the root of all true waiting there must lie the surrender and the readiness to be wholly fitted for God's use in the service of men. And here is still another who is ready to work as well as wait, but is looking for some great inflow of the Spirit's power to enable him to do mighty works, while he forgets that as a believer he already has the Spirit of Christ dwelling in Him; that more grace is only given to those who are faithful in the little; and that it is only in working that we can be taught by the Spirit how to do the greater works. All such, and all Christians, need to learn that waiting has working for its object, that it is only in working that waiting can attain its full perfection and blessedness. It is as we elevate working for God to its true place, as the highest exercise of spiritual privilege and power, that the absolute need and the divine blessing of waiting on God can be fully known.

On the other hand, there are some, there are many, who work for God, but know little of what it is to wait on Him. They have been led to take up Christian work, under the impulse of natural or religious feeling, at the bidding of a pastor or a society, with but very little sense of what a holy thing it is to work for God. They do not know that *God's work can only be done in God's strength, by God Himself working in us.* They have never learnt that, just as the Son of God could do nothing of Himself, but that the Father in Him did the work, as He lived in continual dependence before Him, so, and much more, the believer can do nothing but as God works in him. They do not understand that it is only as in utter weakness we depend upon Him, His power can rest on us. And so they have no conception of a continual waiting on God as being one of the first and essential conditions of successful work. And Christ's Church and the world are sufferers to-day, oh, so terribly! not only because so many of its members are not working for God, but because so much working for God is done without waiting on God.

Among the members of the body of Christ there is a great diversity of gifts and operations. Some, who are

confined to their homes by reason of sickness or other duties, may have more time for waiting on God than opportunity of direct working for Him. Others, who are overpressed by work, find it very difficult to find time and quiet for waiting on Him. These may mutually supply each other's lack. Let those who have time for waiting on God definitely link themselves to some who are working. Let those who are working as definitely claim the aid of those to whom the special ministry of waiting on God has been entrusted. So will the unity and the health of the body be maintained. So will those who wait know that the outcome will be power for work, and those who work, that their only strength is the grace obtained by waiting. So will God work for His Church that waits on Him.

Let us pray that as we proceed in these meditations on working for God, the Holy Spirit may show us how sacred and how urgent our calling is to work, how absolute our dependence is upon God's strength to work in us, how sure it is that those who wait on Him shall renew their strength, and how we shall find waiting on God and working for God to be indeed inseparably one.

1. It is only as God works for me, and in me, that I can work for Him.

2. All His work for me is through His life in me.

3. He will most surely work, if I wait on Him.

4. All His working for me, and my waiting on Him, has but one aim, to fit me for His work of saving men.

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

II

Good Works the Light of the World

‘Ye are the light of the world. Let your light shine before men, that they may see your *good works*, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.’—Matt. 5:14, 16.

A light is always meant for the use of those who are in darkness, that by it they may see. The sun lights up the darkness of this world. A lamp is hung in a room to give it light. The Church of Christ is the light of men. The God of this world hath blinded their eyes; Christ’s disciples are to shine into their darkness and give them light. As the rays of light stream forth from the sun and scatter that light all about, so the good works of believers are the light that streams out from them to conquer the surrounding darkness, with its ignorance of God and estrangement from Him.

What a high and holy place is thus given to our good works. What power is attributed to them. How much depends upon them. They are not only the light and health and joy of our own life, but in every deed the means of bringing lost souls out of darkness into God’s marvellous light. They are even more. They not only bless men, but they glorify God, in leading men to know Him as the Author of the grace seen in His children. We propose studying the teaching of Scripture in regard to good works, and specially all work done directly for God and His kingdom. Let us listen to what these words of the Master have to teach us.

The aim of good works.—It is, that God may be glorified. You remember how our Lord said to the Father: ‘I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.’ We read more than once of His miracles, that the people glorified God. It was because what He had wrought was manifestly by a Divine power. It is when our good works thus too are something more than the ordinary virtues of refined men, and bear the impress of God upon them, that men will glorify God. They must be the good works of which the Sermon on the Mount is the embodiment—a life of God’s children, doing more than others, seeking to be perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect. This glorifying of God by men may not mean conversion, but it is a preparation for it when an impression favourable to God has been made. The works prepare the way for the words, and are an evidence to the reality of the Divine truth that is taught, while without them the world is powerless.

The whole world was made for the glory of God. Christ came to redeem us from sin and bring us back to serve and glorify Him. Believers are placed in the world with this one object, that they may let their light shine in good works, so as to win men to God. As truly as the light of the sun is meant to lighten the world, the good works of God’s children are meant to be the light of those who know and love not God. What need that we form a right conception of what good works are, as bearing the mark of something heavenly and divine, and having a power to compel the admission that God is in them.

The power of good works.—Of Christ it is written: ‘In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.’ The Divine life gave out a Divine light. Of His disciples Christ said: ‘If any man follow Me, be shall not walk in darkness, but have the *light of life*.’ Christ is our life and light. When it is said to us, Let your light shine, the deepest meaning is, let Christ, who dwells in you, shine. As in the power of His life you do your good works,

your light shines out to all who see you. And because Christ in you is your light, your works, however humble and feeble they be, can carry with them a power of Divine conviction. The measure of the Divine power which works them in you will be the measure of the power working in those who see them. Give way, O child of God, to the Life and Light of Christ dwelling in you, and men will see in your good works that for which they will glorify your Father which is in heaven.

The urgent need of good works in believers.—As needful as that the sun shines every day, yea, more so, is it that every believer lets his light shine before men. For this we have been created anew in Christ, to hold forth the Word of Life, as lights in the world. Christ needs you urgently, my brother, to let His light shine through you. Perishing men around you need your light, if they are to find their way to God. God needs you, to let His glory be seen through you. As wholly as a lamp is given up to lighting a room, every believer ought to give himself up to be the light of a dark world.

Let us undertake the study of what working for God is, and what good works are as part of this, with the desire to follow Christ fully, and so to have the light of life shining into our hearts and lives, and from us on all around.

1. *'Ye are the light of the world!'* The words express the calling of the Church as a whole. The fulfilment of her duty will depend upon the faithfulness with which each individual member loves and lives for those around him.

2. In all our efforts to waken the Church to evangelise the world, our first aim must be to raise the standard of life for the individual believer of the teaching: As truly as a candle only exists with the object of giving light in the darkness, *the one object of your existence is to be a light to men.*

3. Pray God by His Holy Spirit to reveal it to you that you have nothing to live for but to let the light and love of the life of God shine upon souls.

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

III

Son, go Work

‘Son, *go work* to-day in my vineyard.’—Matt. 21:28.

The father had two sons. To each he gave the command to go and work in his vineyard. The one went, the other went not. God has given the command and the power to every child of His to work in His vineyard, with the world as the field. The majority of God’s children are not working for Him and the world is perishing.

Of all the mysteries that surround us in the world, is not one of the strangest and most incomprehensible this—that after 1800 years the very name of the Son of God should be unknown to the larger half of the human race.

Just consider what this means. To restore the ruin sin had wrought, God, the Almighty Creator, actually sent His own Son to the world to tell men of His love, and to bring them His life and salvation. When Christ made His disciples partakers of that salvation, and the unspeakable joy it brings, it was with the express understanding that they should make it known to others, and so be the lights of the world. He spoke of all who through them should believe, having the same calling. He left the world with the distinct instruction to carry the Gospel to every creature, and teach all nations to observe all that He had commanded. He at the same time gave the definite assurance that all power for this work was in Him, that He would always be with His people, and that by the power of His Holy Spirit they would be able to witness to Him to the ends of the earth. And what do we see now? After 1800 years two-thirds of the human race have scarce heard the name of Jesus. And of the other third, the larger half is still as ignorant as if they had never heard.

Consider again what this means. All these dying millions, whether in Christendom or heathendom, have an interest in Christ and His salvation. They have a right to Him. Their salvation depends on their knowing Him. He could change their lives from sin and wretchedness to holy obedience and heavenly joy. Christ has a right to them. It would make His heart glad to have them come and be blessed in Him. But they and He are dependent on the service of His people to be the connecting link to brink them and Him together. And yet what His people do is as nothing to what needs to be done, to what could be done, to what ought to be done.

Just consider yet once again what this means. What a revelation of the state of the Church. The great majority of those who are counted believers are doing nothing towards making Christ known to their fellow-men. Of the remainder, the majority are doing so little, and that little so ineffectually, by reason of the lack of wholehearted devotion, that they can hardly be said to be giving themselves to their Lord’s service. And of the remaining portion, who have given themselves and all they have to Christ’s service, so many are occupied with the hospital work of teaching the sick and the weakly in the Church, that the strength left free for aggressive work, and going forth to conquer the world, is terribly reduced. And so, with a finished salvation, and a loving Redeemer, and a Church set apart to carry life and blessing to men, the millions are still perishing.

There can be no question to the Church of more intense and pressing importance than this: What can be done to

waken believers to a sense of their holy calling, and to make them see that *to work for God*, that to offer themselves as instruments *through whom God can do His work*, ought to be the one aim of their life? The vain complaints that are continually heard of a lack of enthusiasm for God's kingdom on the part of the great majority of Christians, the vain attempts to waken anything like an interest in missions proportionate to their claim, or Christ's claim, make us feel that nothing less is needed than a revival that shall be a revolution, and shall raise even the average Christian to an entirely new type of devotion. No true change can come until the truth is preached and accepted, that the law of the kingdom is: *Every believer to live only and wholly for God's service and work.*

The father who called his sons to go and work in his vineyard did not leave it to their choice to do as much or as little as they chose. They lived in his home, they were his children, he counted on what they would give him, their time and strength. This God expects of His children. Until it is understood that each child of God is to give His whole heart to his Father's interest and work, until it is understood that every child of God is to be a worker for God, the evangelisation of the world cannot be accomplished. Let every reader listen, and the Father will say to him personally: 'Son, go work in My vineyard.'

1. Why is it that stirring appeals on behalf of missions often have so little permanent result? Because the command with its motives is brought to men who have not learned that absolute devotion and immediate obedience to their Lord is of the essence of true salvation.

2. If it is once seen, and confessed, that the lack of interest in missions is the token of a low and sickly Christian life, all who plead for missions will make it their first aim to proclaim the calling of every believer to live wholly for God. Every missionary meeting will be a consecration meeting to seek and surrender to the Holy Spirit's power.

3. The average standard of holiness and devotion cannot be higher abroad than at home, or in the Church at large than in individual believers.

4. Every one cannot go abroad, or give his whole time to direct work; but everyone, whatever his calling or circumstances, can give his whole heart to live for souls and the spread of the kingdom.

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

IV

To Each one his Work

‘As a man sojourning in another country, having given authority to his servants, *to each one his work*, commanded the porter also to watch.’—Mark 13:34.

What I have said in a previous chapter of the failure of the Church to do her Master’s work, or even clearly to insist upon the duty of its being done by every member has often led me to ask the question, What must be done to arouse the Church to a right sense of her calling? This little book is an attempt to give the answer. Working for God must take a very different and much more definite place in our teaching and training of Christ’s disciples than it has done.

In studying the question I have been very much helped by the life and writings of a great educationist. The opening sentence of the preface to his biography tells us: ‘Edward Thring was unquestionably the most original and striking figure in the schoolmaster world of his time in England.’ He himself attributes his own power and success to the prominence he gave to a few simple principles, and the faithfulness with which he carried them out at any sacrifice. I have found them as suggestive in regard to the work of preaching as of teaching, and to state them will help to make plain some of the chief lessons this book is meant to teach.

The root-principle that distinguished his teaching from what was current at the time was this: Every boy in school, the dullest, must have the same attention as the cleverest. At Eton, where he had been educated, and had come out First, he had seen the evil of the opposite system. The school kept up its name by training a number of men for the highest prizes, while the majority were neglected. He maintained that this was dishonest: there could be no truth in a school which did not care for all alike. Every boy had some gift; every boy needed special attention; every boy could, with care and patience, be fitted to know and fulfil his mission in life.

Apply this to the Church. Every believer, the feeblest as much as the strongest, has the calling to live and work for the kingdom of his Lord. Every believer has equally a claim on the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, according to his gifts, to fit him for his work. And every believer has a right to be taught and helped by the Church for the service our Lord expects of him. It is when this truth, *every believer the feeblest, to be trained as a worker for God*, gets its true place, that there can be any thought of the Church fulfilling its mission. Not one can be missed, because the Master gave to every one his work.

Another of Thring’s principles was this: It is a law of nature that work is pleasure. See to make it voluntary and not compulsory. Do not lead the boys blindfold. Show them why they have to work, what its value will be, what interest can be awakened in it, what pleasure may be found in it. A little time stolen, as he says, for that purpose, from the ordinary teaching, will be more than compensated for by the spirit which will be thrown into the work.

What a field is opened out here for the preacher of the gospel in the charge he has of Christ’s disciples. To unfold before them the greatness, the glory, the Divine. blessedness of the work to be done. To show its value in the

carrying out of God's will, and gaining His approval; in our becoming the benefactors and saviours of the perishing; in developing that spiritual vigour, that nobility of character, that spirit of self-sacrifice which leads to the true bearing of Christ's image.

A third truth Thring insisted on specially was the need of inspiring the belief in the possibility, yea, the assurance of success in gaining the object of pursuit. That object is not much knowledge; not every boy can attain to this. The drawing out and cultivation of the power there is in himself—this is for every boy—and this alone is true education. As a learner's powers of observation grow under true guidance and teaching and he finds within himself a source of power and pleasure he never knew before, he feels a new self beginning to live, and the world around him gets a new meaning. 'He becomes conscious of an infinity of unsuspected glory in the midst of which we go about our daily tasks, becomes lord of an endless kingdom full of light and pleasure and power.'

If this be the law and blessing of a true education, what light is shed on the calling of all teachers and leaders in Christ's Church! The *know ye nots* of Scripture—that ye are the temple of God—that Christ is in you—that the Holy Spirit dwelleth in you—acquire a new meaning. It tells us that the one thing that needs to be wakened in the hearts of Christians is the faith 'in the power that worketh in us.' As one comes to see the worth and the glory of the work to be done, as one believes in the possibility of his, too, being able to do that work well; as one learns to trust a Divine energy, the very power and spirit of God working in him; 'he will, in the fullest sense become conscious of a new life, with an infinity of unsuspected glory in the midst of which we go about our daily task, and become lord of an endless kingdom full of light and pleasure and power.' This is the royal life to which God has called all His people. The true Christian is one who knows God's power working in himself, and finds it his true joy to have the very life of God flow into him, and through him, and out from him to those around.

1. We must learn to believe in the power of littles—of the value of every individual believer. As men are saved one by one, they must be trained one by one for work.

2. We must believe that work for Christ can become as natural, as much an attraction and a pleasure in the spiritual as in the natural world.

3. We must believe and teach that every believer can become an effective worker in his sphere. Are you seeking to be filled with love to souls?

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

V

To Each according to his Ability

'The kingdom of heaven is as when a man, going into another country, called his own servants, and delivered them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; *to each according to his several ability.'*—Matt. 25:14.

In the parable of the talents we have a most instructive summary of our Lord's teaching in regard to the work He has given to His servants to do. He tells us of His going to heaven and leaving His work on earth to the care of His Church; of His giving every one something to do, however different the gifts might be; of His expecting to get back His money with interest; of the failure of him who had received least; and of what it was that led to that terrible neglect.

'He called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods, and went on his journey.' is literally what our Lord did. He went to heaven, leaving His work with all His goods to the care of His Church. His goods were, the riches of His grace, the spiritual blessings in heavenly places, His word and Spirit, with all the power of His life on the throne of God,—all these He gave in trust to His servants, to be used by them in carrying out His work on earth. The work He had begun they were to prosecute. As some rich merchant leaves Cape Town to reside in London, while his business is carried on by trustworthy servants, our Lord took His people into partnership with Himself, and entrusted His work on earth entirely to their care. Through their neglect it would suffer; their diligence would be His enrichment. Here we have the true root-principle of Christian service; Christ has made Himself dependent for the extension of His kingdom on the faithfulness of His people.

'Unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his several ability.' Though there was a difference in the measure, every one received a portion of the master's goods. It is in connection with the service we are to render to each other that we read of 'the grace given to each of us according to the measure of the gift of Christ.' This truth, that *every believer without exception has been set apart to take an active part in the work of winning the world for Christ,* has almost been lost sight of . Christ was first a son, then a servant. Every believer is first a child of God, then a servant. It is the highest honour of a son to be a servant, to have the father's work entrusted to him. Neither the home nor the foreign missionary work of the Church will ever be done right until *every believer feels that the one object of his being in the world* is to work for the kingdom. The first duty of the servants in the parable was to spend their life in caring for their master's interests.

'After a long time the lord of those servants cometh and maketh a reckoning with them.' Christ keeps watch over the work He has left to be done on earth; His kingdom and glory depend upon it. He will not only hold reckoning when He comes again to judge, but comes unceasingly to inquire of His servants as to their welfare and work. He comes to approve and encourage, to correct and warn. By His word and Spirit He asks us to say whether we are using our talents diligently, and, as His devoted servants, living only and entirely for His work. Some He finds labouring diligently, and to them He frequently says: 'Enter into the joy of thy Lord.' Others He sees discouraged, and them He inspires with new hope. Some He finds working in their own strength; these He reproves. Still others He finds sleeping or hiding their talent; to such His voice speaks in solemn warning: 'from him that hath shall be

taken away even that he hath.' Christ's heart is in His work; every day He watches over it with the intensest interest; let us not disappoint Him nor deceive ourselves.

'Lord, I was afraid and hid thy talent in the earth.' That the man of the one talent should have been the one to fail, and to be so severely punished is a lesson of deep solemnity. It calls the Church to beware lest, by neglecting to teach the feebler ones, the one-talent men, that their service, too, is needed, she allow them to let their gifts lie unused. In teaching the great truth that every branch is to bear fruit, special stress must be laid on the danger of thinking that this can only be expected of the strong and advanced Christian. When Truth reigns in a school, the most backward pupil has the same attention as the more clever. Care must be taken that the feeblest Christians receive special training, so that they, too, may joyfully have their share in the service of their Lord and all the blessedness it brings. If Christ's work is to be done, not one can be missed.

'Lord, I knew that thou art a hard man, and I was afraid.' Wrong thoughts of God, looking upon His service as that of a hard master, are one chief cause of failure in service. If the Church is indeed to care for the feeble ones, for the one-talent servants, who are apt to be discouraged by reason of their conscious weakness, we must teach them what God says of the sufficiency of grace and the certainty of success. They must learn to believe that *the power of the Holy Spirit within them fits them for the work to which God has called them.* They must learn to understand that God Himself will strengthen them with might by His Spirit in the inner man. They must be taught that work is joy and health and strength. Unbelief lies at the root of sloth. Faith opens the eyes to see the blessedness of God's service, the sufficiency of the strength provided, and the rich reward. Let the Church awake to her calling to train the feeblest of her members to know that Christ counts upon every redeemed one to live wholly for His work. This alone is true Christianity, is full salvation.

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

VI

Life and Work

'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to accomplish *His work*. I must *work the works of Him* that sent Me. I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have *finished the work* Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me with Thyself.'—John 5:34, 9:4, 17:4.

'Work is the highest form of existence.' The highest manifestation of the Divine Being is in His work. Read carefully again the words of our Blessed Lord at the head of the chapter, and see what Divine glory there is in His work. In His work Christ showed forth His own glory and that of the Father. It was because of the work He had done, and because in it He had glorified the Father, that He claimed to share the glory of the Father in heaven. The greater works He was *to do* in answer to the prayer of the disciples was, that the Father might be glorified in the Son. Work is indeed the highest form of existence, the highest manifestation of the Divine glory in the Father and in His Son.

What is true of God is true of His creature. Life is movement, is action, and reveals itself in what it accomplishes. The bodily life, the intellectual, the moral, the spiritual life—individual, social, national life—each of these is judged of by its work. The character and quality of the work depends on the life: as the life, so the work. And, on the other hand the life depends on the work; without this there can be no full development and manifestation and perfecting of the life: as the work, so the life.

This is specially true of the spiritual life—the life of the Spirit in us. There may be a great deal of religious work with its external activities, the outcome of human will and effort, with but little true worth and power, because the Divine life is feeble. When the believer does not know that Christ is living in him, does not know the Spirit and power of God working in him, there may be much earnestness and diligence, with little that lasts for eternity. There may, on the contrary, be much external weakness and apparent failure, and yet results that prove that the life is indeed of God.

The work depends upon the life. And the life depends on the work for its growth and perfection. All life has a destiny; it cannot accomplish its purpose without work; life is perfected by work. The highest manifestation of its hidden nature and power comes out in its work. And so work is the great factor by which the hidden beauty and the Divine possibilities of the Christian life are brought out. Not only for the sake of what it accomplishes through the believer as God's instrument, but what it effects on himself, work must in the child of God take the same place it has in God Himself. As in the Father and the Son, so with the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, work is the highest manifestation of life.

Work must be restored to its right place in God's scheme of the Christian life as in very deed the highest form of existence. To be the intelligent willing channel of the power of God, to be capable of working the very work of God, to be animated by the Divine Spirit of love, and in that to be allowed to work life and blessing to men; it is this gives nobility to life, because it is for this we are created in the image of God. As God never for a moment ceases to work His work of love and blessing in us and through us, so our working out what He works in us is our

highest proof of being created anew in His likeness.

If God's purpose with the perfection of the individual believer, with the appointment of His Church as the body of Christ to carry on His work of winning back a rebellious world to His allegiance and love is to be carried out, working for God must have much greater prominence given to it as the true glory of our Christian calling. Every believer must be taught that, as work is the only perfect manifestation, and therefore the perfection of life in God and throughout the world, so our work is to be our highest glory. Shall it be so in our lives?

If this is to come, we must remember two things. The one is that it can only come by beginning to work. Those who have not had their attention specially directed to it cannot realise how great the temptation is to make work a matter of thought and prayer and purpose, without its really being *done*. It is easier to bear than to think, easier to think than to speak, easier to speak than to act. We may listen and accept and admire God's will, and in our prayer profess our willingness to do,—and yet not actually *do*. Let us, with such measure of grace as we have, and much prayer for more, take up our calling as God's working men, and do good hard work for Him. Doing is the best teacher. If you want to know how to do a thing, begin and do it.

Then you will feel the need of the second thing I wish to mention, and be made capable of understanding it,—that there is sufficient grace in Christ for all the work you have to do. You will see with ever-increasing gladness how He the Head works all in you the member, and how work for God may become your closest and fullest fellowship with Christ, your highest participation in the power of His risen and glorified life.

1. Life and work: beware of separating them, The more work you have, the more your work appears a failure. The more unfit you feel for work, take all the more time and care to have your inner life renewed in close fellowship with God.

2. Christ liveth in me—is the secret of joy and hope, and also of power for work. Care for the life, the life will care for the work. 'Be filled with the Spirit.'

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

VII

The Father abiding in Me doeth the Work

‘Jesus answered them, *My Father worketh* even until now, *and I work.*’—John 5:17-20.

‘Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the words that I speak I speak not of Myself: but the Father abiding in Me *doeth* the work.’—John 14:10.

Jesus Christ became man that He might show us what a true man is, how God meant to live and work in man, and how man may find his life and do his work in God. In words like those above, our Lord opens up the inner mystery of His life, and discovers to us the nature and the deepest secret of His working. He did not come to the world to work instead of the Father; the Father was ever working—‘worketh even until now.’ Christ’s work was the fruit, the earthly reflection of the Heavenly Father working. And it was not as if Christ merely saw and copied what the Father willed or did: ‘the Father *abiding in Me* doeth the work.’ Christ did all His work in the power of the Father dwelling and working in Him. So complete and real was His dependence on the Father, that, in expounding it to the Jews, He used the strong expressions (v. 19, 30)John 5:19, 30: ‘The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing’; ‘I can do nothing of Myself.’ As literally as what He said is true of us, ‘Apart from Me ye can do nothing,’ is it true of Him too. ‘The Father abiding in Me doeth the work.’

Jesus Christ became man that He might show us what true man is, what the true relation between man and God, what the true way of serving God and doing His work. When we are made new creatures in Christ Jesus, the life we receive is the very life that was and is in Christ, and it is only by studying His life on earth that we know how we are to live. ‘As I live because of the Father, so he that eateth Me shall live because of Me.’ His dependence on the Father is the law of our dependence on Him and on the Father through Him.

Christ counted it no humiliation to be ,able to do nothing of Himself, to be always and absolutely dependent on the Father. He counted it His highest glory, because so all His works were the works of the all glorious God in Him. When shall we understand that to wait on God, to bow before Him in perfect helplessness, and let Him work all in us, is our true nobility, and the secret of the highest activity? This alone is the true Son-life, the true life of every child of God. As this life is known and maintained, the power for work will grow, because the soul is in the attitude in which God can work in us, as the God who ‘worketh for him that waiteth on Him.’ It is the ignorance or neglect of the great truths, that there can be no true work for God *but as God works it in us*, and that God cannot work in us fully *but as we live in absolute dependence on Him*, that is the explanation of the universal complaint of so much Christian activity with so little real result. The revival which many are longing and praying for must begin with this: the return of Christian ministers and workers to their true place before God—in Christ and like Christ, one of complete dependence and continual waiting on God to work in them.

Let me invite all workers, young and old, successful or disappointed, full of hope or full of fear, to come and learn from our Lord Jesus the secret of true work for God. ‘My Father worketh, and I work;’ ‘The Father abiding in Me doeth the works.’ Divine Fatherhood means that God is all, and gives all, and works all. Divine Sonship means continual dependence on the Father, and the reception, moment by moment, of all the strength needed for His

Work. Try to grasp the great truth that because ‘it is God who worketh all in all,’ your one need is, in deep humility and weakness, to wait for and to trust in His working. Learn from this that God can only work in us as He dwells in us. ‘The Father abiding in Me doeth the works.’ Cultivate the holy sense of God’s continual nearness and presence, of your being His temple, and of His dwelling in you. Offer yourself for Him to work in you all His good pleasure. You will find that work, instead of being a hindrance, can become your greatest incentive to a life of fellowship and childlike dependence.

At first it may appear as if the waiting for God to work will keep you back from your work. It may indeed—but only to bring the greater blessing, when you have learned the lesson of faith, that counts on His working even when you do not feel it. You may have to do your work in weakness and fear and much trembling. You will know that it is all, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. As you know yourself better and God better, you will be content that it should ever be—His strength made perfect in our weakness.

1. ‘The Father abiding in Me doeth the work.’ There is the same law for the Head and the member, for Christ and the believer. ‘It is the same God that worketh all in all.’

2. The Father not only worked in the Son when He was on earth, but now, too, that He is in heaven. It is as we *believe in Christ in the Father’s working in Him,* that we shall do the greater works. See John 14:10-12.

3. It is as the indwelling God, the Father abiding in us, that God works in us. Let the life of God in the soul be clear, the work will be sure.

4. Pray much for grace to say, in the name of Jesus, ‘The Father abiding in me doeth the work.’

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

VIII

Greater Works

Verily, verily, I say unto You, He that believeth on Me, the works *that I do* shall *he do also* and greater works *shall he do*; because I go unto the Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, *that will I do,* that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, *that will I do*.'—John 14:12-14.

In the words (ver. 10) 'The Father abiding in Me doeth the works,' Christ had revealed the secret of His and of all Divine service—man yielding himself for God to dwell and to work in him. When Christ now promises, 'He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also,' the law of the Divine inworking remains unchanged. In us, as much as in Him, one might even say a thousand times more than with Him, it must still ever be: The Father in me doeth the works. With Christ and with us, it is 'the same God who worketh all in all.'

How this is to be, is taught us in the words, 'He that believeth on Me.' That does not only mean, for salvation, as a Saviour from sin. But much more. Christ had just said (vers. 10, 11), *'Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me:* the Father *abiding in Me* doeth the works.' We need to believe in Christ as Him in and through whom the Father unceasingly works. To believe in Christ is to receive Him into the heart. When we see the Father's working inseparably connected with Christ, we know that to believe in Christ, and receive Him into the heart, is to receive the Father dwelling in Him and working through Him. The works His disciples are to do cannot possibly be done in any other way than His own are done.

This becomes still more clear from what our Lord adds: 'And greater works shall he do; because I go unto the Father.' What the greater works are, is evident. The disciples at Pentecost with three thousand baptized, and multitudes added to the Lord; Philip at Samaria, with the whole city filled with joy; the men of Cyprus and Cyrene, and, later on, Barnabas at Antioch, with much people added to the Lord; Paul in his travels, and a countless host of Christ's servants down to our day, have in the ingathering of souls, done what the Master condescendingly calls greater works than He did in the days of His humiliation and weakness.

The reason why it should be so our Lord makes plain, 'Because I go to the Father.' When He entered the glory of the Father, all power in heaven and on earth was given to Him as our Redeemer. In a way more glorious than ever the Father was to work through Him; and He then to work through His disciples. Even as His own work on earth 'in the days of the weakness of the flesh, had been in a power received from the Father in heaven, so His people, in their weakness, would do works like His, and greater works in the same way, through a power received from heaven. The law of the Divine working is unchangeable: God's work can only be done by God Himself. It is as we see this in Christ, and receive Him in this capacity, as the One in and through whom God works all, and so yield ourselves wholly to the Father working in Him and in us,' that we shall do greater works than He did.

The words that follow bring out still more strongly the great truths we have been learning, that it is our Lord Himself who will work all in us, even as the Father did in Him, and that our posture is to be exactly what His was, one of entire receptivity and dependence. 'Greater works shall *he do,* because I go to the Father, and whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, *that will I do.*' Christ connects the greater works the believer is to do, with the promise

that *He will do* whatever the believer asks. Prayer in the name of Jesus will be the expression of that dependence that waits on Him for His working, to which He gives the promise: Whatsoever ye ask, I will do, in you and through you. And when He adds, ‘that the Father may be glorified in the Son,’ He reminds us bow He had glorified the Father, by yielding to Him as Father, to work all His work in Himself as Son. In heaven Christ would still glorify the Father, by receiving from the Father the power, and working in His disciples what the Father would. The creature, as the Son Himself can give the Father no higher glory than yielding to Him to work all. The believer can glorify the Father in no other way than the Son, by an absolute and unceasing dependence on the Son, in whom the Father works, to communicate and work in us all the Father’s work. ‘If ye shall ask anything in My name, *that will I do,*’ and so ye shall do greater works.

Let every believer strive to learn the one blessed lesson. I am to do the works I have seen Christ doing; I may even do greater works as I yield myself to Christ exalted on the throne, in a power He had not on earth; I may count on Him working in me according to that power. My one need is the spirit of dependence and waiting, and prayer and faith, that Christ abiding in me will do the works, even whatsoever I ask.

1. How was Christ able to work the works of God? By God abiding in Him! How can I do the works of Christ? By Christ abiding in me!

2. How can I do greater works than Christ? By believing, not only in Christ, the Incarnate and Crucified, but Christ triumphant on the throne.

3. In work everything depends, O believer, on the life, the inner life, the Divine life. Pray to realise that work is vain except as it is in ‘the power of the Holy Spirit’ dwelling in thee.

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

IX

Created in Christ Jesus for Good Works

'By grace have ye been saved through faith; *not of works,* lest any man should glory. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *for good works*, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them.'—Eph. 2:8-10.

We have been saved, not *of works,* but *for* good works. How vast the difference. How essential the apprehension of that difference to the health of the Christian life. Not *of* works which we have done, as the source whence salvation comes, have we been saved. And yet *for* good works, as the fruit and outcome of salvation, as part of God's work in us, the one thing for which we have been created anew. As worthless as are our works in procuring salvation, so infinite is their worth as that for which God has created and prepared us. Let us seek to hold these two truths in their fulness of spiritual meaning. The deeper our conviction that we have been saved, not of works, but of grace, the stronger the proof we should give that we have indeed been saved for good works.

'Not of works, for ye are God's workmanship.' If works could have saved us, there was no need for our redemption. Because our works were all sinful and vain, God undertook to make us anew—we are now His workmanship, and all the good works we do are His workmanship too. 'His workmanship, created us anew in Christ Jesus.' So complete had been the ruin of sin, that God had to do the work of creation over again in Christ Jesus. In Him, and specially in His resurrection from the dead, He created us anew, after His own image, into the likeness of the life which Christ had lived. In the power of that life and resurrection, we are able, we are perfectly fitted, for doing good works. As the eye, because it was *created* for the light, is most perfectly adapted for its work, as the vine-branch, because it was *created* to bear grapes, does its work so naturally, we who have been *created* in Christ Jesus for good work, may rest assured that a Divine capacity for good works is the very law of our being. If we but know and believe in this our destiny, if we but live our life in Christ Jesus, as we were new created in Him, we can, we will, be fruitful unto every good work.

'Created for good works, which God hath afore prepared that we should walk in them.' We have been prepared for the works, and the works prepared for us. To understand this, think of how God foreordained His servants of old, Moses and Joshua, Samuel and David, Peter and Paul, for the work He had for them, and foreordained equally the works for them. The feeblest member of the body is equally cared for by the Head as the most honoured The Father has prepared for the humblest of His children their works as much as for those who are counted chief. For every child God has a life-plan, with work apportioned just according to the power, and grace provided just according to the work. And so just as strong and clear as the teaching, *salvation not of works,* is its blessed counterpart, *salvation for good works*, because God created us for them, and even prepared them for us.

And so the Scripture confirms the double lesson this little book desires to bring you. The one, that good works are God's object in the new life He has given you, and ought therefore to be as distinctly your object. As every human being was created for work, and endowed with the needful powers, and can only live out a true and healthy life by working, so every believer exists to do good works, that in them his life may be perfected, his fellowmen may be blessed, his Father in heaven be glorified. We educate all our children with the thought that

they must have their work in the world: when shall the Church learn that its great work is to train every believer to take his share in God's great work, and to abound in the good works for which he was created? Let each of us seek to take in the deep spiritual truth of the message, *'Created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God hath afore prepared'* for each one, and which are waiting for him to take up and fulfil.

The other lesson—that waiting on God is the one great thing needed on our part if we would do the good works God has prepared for us. Let us take up into our hearts these words in their Divine meaning: *We are God's workmanship.* 'Not by one act in the past, but in a continuous operation. We are created for good works, as the great means for glorifying God. The good works are prepared for each of us, that we might walk in them. Surrender to and dependence upon God's working is our one need. Let us consider how our new creation for good works is all *in Christ Jesus*, and abiding *in Him, believing on Him*, and looking *for His strength alone* will become the habit of our soul. *Created for good works!* will reveal to us at once the Divine command and the sufficient power to live a life in good works.

Let us pray for the Holy Spirit to work the word into the very depths of our consciousness: *Created in Christ Jesus for good works!* In its light we shall learn what a glorious destiny, what an infinite obligation, what a perfect capacity is ours.

1. Our creation in Adam was for good works. It resulted in entire failure. Our new creation in Christ is for good works again. But with this difference: perfect provision has been made for securing them.

2. Created by God for good works; created by God in Christ Jesus; the good works prepared by God for us—let us pray for the Holy Spirit to show us and impart to us all this means.

3. Let the life in fellowship with God be true; the power for the work will be sure. As the life, so the work.

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

X

Work, for God works in You

‘*Work out* your own salvation with fear and trembling; for *it is God which worketh in you* both to will and to work, for His good pleasure.’—Phil. 2:12, 13.

In our last chapter we saw what salvation is. It is our being God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works. It concludes, as one of its chief and essential elements, all that treasury of good works which God afore prepared that we should walk in them. In the light of this thought we get the true and full meaning of to-day’s text. Work out your own salvation, such as God has meant it to be, a walk in all the good works which God has prepared for you. Study to know exactly what the salvation is God has prepared for you, all that He has meant and made it possible for you to be, and work it out with fear and trembling. Let the greatness of this Divine and most holy life, hidden in Christ, your own absolute impotence, and the terrible dangers and temptations besetting you, make you work in fear and trembling,

And yet, that fear need never become unbelief, nor that trembling discouragement, *for*—it is God which worketh in you. Here is the secret of a power that is absolutely sufficient for everything we have to do, of a perfect assurance that we can do all that God really means us to do. God works in us both to will and to work. First, *to will*; He gives the insight into what is to be done, the desire that makes the work pleasure, the firm purpose of the will that masters the whole being, and makes it ready and eager for action. And then *to work*. He does not work to will, and then leave its unaided to work it out ourselves. The will may have seen and accepted the work, and yet the power be lacking to perform. The renewed will of Romans 7 delighted in God’s law, and yet the man was impotent *to do*, until in Romans 8:2-4, by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, he was set free from the law of sin and death; then first could the righteousness of the law be fulfilled in him, as one who walked not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

One great cause of the failure of believers in their work is that, when they think that God has given them *to will*, they undertake *to work* in the strength of that will. They have never learnt the lesson, that because God has created us in Christ Jesus for good works, and has afore prepared the good works in which we are to walk, He must needs, and will most certainly, Himself work them all in us. They have never listened long to the voice speaking ‘It is God which worketh in you.’

We have here to do with one of the deepest, most spiritual, and most precious truths of Scripture—the unceasing operation of Almighty God in our heart and life. In virtue of the very nature of God, as a Spiritual Being not confined to any place, but everywhere present, there can be no spiritual life but as it is upheld by His personal indwelling.

Not without the deepest reason does Scripture say, He worketh all in all. Not only of Him are all things as their first beginning, and to Him as their end, but also through Him, who alone maintains them.

In the man Christ Jesus the working of the Father in Him was the source of all He did. In the new man, created in Christ Jesus, the unceasing dependence on the Father is our highest privilege, our true nobility. This is indeed fellowship with God: God Himself working in us to will and to do.

Let us seek to learn the true secret of working for God. It is not, as many think, that we do our best, and then leave God to do the rest. By no means. But it is this, that we know that God's working His salvation in us is the secret of our working it out. That salvation includes every work we have to do. *The faith of God's working in us is the measure of our fitness to work effectively*. The promises, 'According to your faith be it unto you,' 'All things are possible to him that believeth,' have their full application here. *The deeper our faith in God's working in us,* the more freely will the power of God work in us, the more true and fruitful will our work be.

Perhaps some Sunday-school worker reads this. Let me ask, Have you really believed that your only power to do God's work is as one who has been created in Christ Jesus for good works, as one in whom God Himself works to will and to work? Have you yielded yourself to wait for that working? Do you work because you know God works in you? Say not that these thoughts are too high. The work of leading young souls to Christ is too high for us indeed, but if we live as little children, in believing that God will work all in us, we shall do His work in His strength. Pray much to learn and practise the lesson in all you do: Work, for God worketh in you.

1. I think we begin to feel that the spiritual apprehension of this great truth, 'God worketh in you,' is what all workers greatly need.

2. The Holy Spirit is the mighty power of God, dwelling in believers for life and for work. Beseech God to show it you, that in all our service our first care must be the daily renewing of the Holy Spirit.

3. Obey the command to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Believe in His indwelling. Wait for His teaching. Yield to His leading. Pray for His mighty working. Live in the Spirit.

4. What the mighty power of God works in us we are surely able to do. Only give way to the power working in you.

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

XI

Faith working by Love

‘In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith *working* through love. Through love be servants one to another; for the whole law is fulfilled in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.’—Gal. 5:6, 13.

In Christ Jesus no external privilege avails. The Jew might boast of his circumcision, the token of God’s covenant. The Gentile might boast of his uncircumcision, with an entrance into the Kingdom free from the Jewish law. Neither availed aught in the Kingdom of heaven—nothing but, as we have it in 6:15, a new creature, in which old things are passed away and all things become new. Or, as we have it in our text—as a description of the life of the new creature—nothing but *faith working by love,* that makes us in love serve one another.

What a perfect description of the new life. First you have faith, as the root, planted and rooted in Christ Jesus. Then as its aim you have works, as the fruit. And then between the two, as the tree, growing downwards into the root and bearing the fruit upward, you have love, with the life-sap flowing through it by which the root brings forth the fruit, Of faith we need not speak here. We have seen how believing on Jesus does the greater works; how the faith in the new creation, and in God working in us, is the secret of all work. Nor need we speak here of works—our whole book aims at securing for them the place in every heart and life that they have in God’s heart and in His Word.

We have here to study specially the great truth that all work is to be love, that faith cannot do its work but through love, that no works can have any worth but as they come of love, and that love alone is the sufficient strength for all the work we have to do.

The power for work is love.—It was love that moved God to all His work in creation and redemption. It was love that enabled Christ as man to work and to suffer as He did. It is love that can inspire us with the power of a self-sacrifice that seeks not its own, but is ready to live and die for others. It is love that gives us the patience that refuses to give up the unthankful or the hardened. It is love that reaches and overcomes the most hopeless. Both in ourselves and those for whom we labour love is the power for work. Let us love as Christ loved us.

The power for love is faith.—Faith roots its life in the life of Christ Jesus, which is all love. Faith knows, even when we cannot realise fully, the wonderful gift that has been given into our heart in the Holy Spirit shedding abroad God’s love there. A spring in the earth may often be hidden or stopped up. Until. it is opened the fountain cannot flow out. Faith knows that there is a fountain of love within that can spring up into eternal life, that can flow out as rivers of living waters. It assures us that we can love, that we have a Divine power to love within us, as an unalienable endowment of our new nature.

The power to exercise and show love is work.—There is no such thing as power in the abstract; it only acts as it is exercised. Power in repose cannot be found or felt. This is specially true of the Christian graces, hidden as they

are amid the weakness of our human nature. It is only by doing that you know that you have; a grace must be acted ere we can rejoice in its possession. This is the unspeakable blessedness of work, and makes it so essential to a healthy Christian life that it wakens up and strengthens love, and makes us partakers of its joy.

Faith working by love.—In Christ Jesus nothing avails but this. Workers for God! believe this. Practise it. Thank God much for the fountain of eternal love opened within you. Pray fervently and frequently that God may strengthen you with might by the power of His Spirit in your inner man, so that, with Christ dwelling in you, you may be rooted and grounded in love. And live then, your daily life, in your own home, in all your intercourse with men, in all your work, as a life of Divine love. The ways of love are so gentle and heavenly, you may not learn them all at once. But be of good courage, only believe in the power that worketh in you, and yield yourself to the work of love: it will surely gain the victory.

Faith working by love.—In Christ Jesus nothing avails but this. Let me press home this message, too, on those who have never yet or only just begun to think of working for God. Come and listen.

You owe everything to God's love. The salvation you have received is all love. God's one desire is *to fill you with His love.* For His own satisfaction, for your own happiness, for the saving of men. Now, I ask you—Will you not accept God's wonderful offer *to be filled with His love?* Oh! come and give up heart and life to the joy and the service of His love. Believe that the fountain of love is within you; it will begin to flow as you make a channel for it by deeds of love. Whatever work for God you try to do, seek to put love into it. Pray for the spirit of love. Give yourself to live a life of love; to think how you can love those around you, by praying for them, by serving them, by labouring for their welfare, temporal and spiritual. Faith working by love in Christ Jesus, this alone availeth much.

1. 'Faith, Hope, Love: the greatest of these is Love.' There is no faith or hope in God. But God is love. The most Godlike thing is love.

2. Love is the nature of God. When it is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit love becomes our new nature. Believe this, give yourself over to it, and act it out.

3. Love is God's power to do His work. Love was Christ's power. To work for God pray earnestly to be filled with love to souls!

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

XII

Bearing Fruit in every Good Work

'To walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing, bearing fruit in *every good work*, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to the might of His glory, unto all patience.'—Col. 1:10.

There is a difference between fruit and work. Fruit is that which comes spontaneously, without thought or will, the natural and necessary outcome of a healthy life. Work, on the contrary, is the product of effort guided by intelligent thought and will. In the Christian life we have the two elements in combination. All true work must be fruit, the growth and product of our inner life, the operation of God's Spirit within us. And yet all fruit must be work, the effect of our deliberate purpose and exertion. In the words, 'bearing fruit in every good work,' we have the practical summing up of the truth taught in some previous chapters. Because God works by His life in us, the work we do is fruit. Because, in the faith of His working, we have to will and to work, the fruit we bear is work. In the harmony between the perfect spontaneity that comes from God's life and Spirit animating us, and our co-operation with Him as His intelligent fellow-labourers, lies the secret of all true work.

In the words that precede our text, 'filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,' we have the human side, our need of knowledge and wisdom; in the words that follow, 'strengthened with all power, according to the might of His glory,' we have the Divine side. God teaching and strengthening, man learning to understand and patiently do His will; such is the double life that will be fruitful in every good work.

It has been said of the Christian life that the natural man must first become spiritual, and then again the spiritual man must become natural. As the whole natural life becomes truly spiritual, all our work will partake of the nature of fruit, the outgrowth of the life of God within us. And as the spiritual again becomes perfectly natural to us, a second nature in which we are wholly at home, all the fruit will bear the mark of true work, calling into full exercise every faculty of our being.

'Bearing fruit unto every good work.' The words, suggest again the great thought, that as an apple-tree or a vine is planted solely for its fruit, so the great purpose of our redemption is that God may have us for His work and service. It has been well said: 'The end of man is an Action and not a Thought, though it were of the noblest.' It is in his work that the nobility of man's nature as ruler of the world is proved. It is for good works that we have been new created in Christ Jesus: It is when men see our good works that our Father in Heaven will be glorified and have the honour which is His due for His workmanship. In the parable of the vine our Lord insisted on this: 'He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth *much fruit.*' 'Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear *much fruit.*' Nothing is more to the honour of a husbandman than to succeed in raising an abundant crop—much fruit is glory to God.

What need that every believer, even the feeblest branch of the Heavenly Vine, the man who has only one talent, be encouraged and helped, and even trained, to aim at the much fruit. A little strawberry plant may, in its measure, be bearing a more abundant crop than a large apple-tree. The call to be fruitful in every good work is for

every Christian without exception. The grace that fits for it, of which the prayer, in which our words are found, speaks, is for every one. Every branch fruitful in every good work—this is an essential part of God's Gospel.

'Bearing fruit in every good work.' Let us study to get a full impression of the two sides of this Divine truth. God's first creation of life was in the vegetable kingdom. There it was a life without anything of will or self-effort, all growth and fruit was simply His own direct work, the spontaneous outcome of His hidden working. In the creation of the animal kingdom there was an advance. A new element was introduced—thought and will and work. In man these two elements were united in perfect harmony. The absolute dependence of the grass and the lily on the God who clothes them with their beauty were to be the groundwork of our relationship—nature has nothing but what it receives from God. Our works are to be fruit, the product of a God-given power. But to this was added the true mark of our God-likeness the power of will and independent action: all fruit is to be our own work. As we grasp this we shall see how the most absolute acknowledgment of our having nothing in ourselves is consistent with the deepest sense of obligation and the strongest will to exert our powers to the very utmost. We shall learn to study the prayer of our text as those who must seek all their wisdom and strength from God alone. And we shall boldly give ourselves, as those who are responsible for the use of that wisdom and strength, to the diligence and the sacrifice and the effort needed for a life bearing fruit in every good work.

1. Much depends, for quality and quantity, on the healthy life of the tree. The life of God, of Christ Jesus, of His Spirit, the Divine life in you, is strong and sure.

2. That life is love. Believe in it. Act it out. Have it replenished day by day out of the fulness there is in Christ.

3. Let all your work be fruit; let all your willing and working be inspired by the life of God. So will you walk worthily of the Lord with all pleasing.

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

XIII

Always abounding in the Work of the Lord

'Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, , unmoveable, always abounding in *the work of the Lord,* forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'—1 Cor. 15:58.

We all know the fifteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians, in its Divine revelation of the meaning of Christ's resurrection, with all the blessings of which it is the source.

It gives us a living Saviour, who revealed Himself to His disciples on earth, and to Paul from heaven. It secures to us the complete deliverance from all sin. It is the pledge of His final victory over every enemy, when He gives up the kingdom to the Father, and God is all in all. It assures us of the resurrection of the body, and our entrance on the heavenly life. Paul had closed his argument with his triumphant appeal to Death and Sin and the Law: 'O Death, where is thy victory? The sting of Death is Sin, and the power of Sin is the Law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' And then follows, after fifty-seven verses of exultant teaching concerning the mystery and the glory of the resurrection life in our Lord and His people, just one verse of practical application: '*Wherefore,* my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.' The faith in a risen, living Christ, and in all that His resurrection is to us in time and eternity, is to fit us for, is to prove itself in—abounding work for our Lord!

It cannot be otherwise. Christ's resurrection was His final victory over sin, and death, and Satan, and His entrance upon His work of giving the Spirit from heaven and extending His kingdom throughout the earth. Those who shared the resurrection joy at once received the commission to make known the joyful news. It was so with Mary and the women. It was so with the disciples the evening of the resurrection day. 'As the Father sent Me, I send you.' It was so with all to whom the charge was given: 'Go into all the world, preach the Gospel to every creature.' The resurrection is the beginning and the pledge of Christ's victory over all the earth. That .victory is to be carried out to its complete manifestation through His people. The faith and joy of the resurrection life are the inspiration and the power for the work of doing it. And so the call comes to all believers without exception: 'Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye always abounding in the work of the Lord!'

'In the work of the Lord.' The connection tells us at once what that work is. Nothing else, nothing less than, telling others of the risen Lord, and proving to them what new life Christ has brought to us. As we indeed know and acknowledge Him as Lord over all we are, and live in the joy of His service, we shall see that the work of the Lord is but one work—*that of winning men to know and bow to Him.* Amid all the forms of lowly, living, patient service, this will be the one aim, in the power of the life of the risen Lord, to make Him Lord of all.

This work of the Lord is no easy one. It cost Christ His life to conquer sin and Satan and gain the risen life. It will cost us our life, too—the sacrifice of the life of nature. It needs the surrender of all on earth to live in the full power of resurrection newness of life. The power of sin, and the world, in those around us is strong, and Satan does not yield his servants an easy prey to our efforts. It needs a heart in close touch with the risen Lord, truly living the resurrection life, to be stedfast, unmoveable, *always abounding* in the work of the Lord. But that is a

life that can be lived—because Jesus lives.

Paul adds: ‘Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not vain in the Lord.’ I have spoken more than once of the mighty influence that the certainty of reward for work, in the shape of wages or riches, exerts on the millions of earth’s workers. And shall not Christ’s workers believe that, with such a Lord, their reward is sure and great? The work is often difficult and slow, and apparently fruitless. We are apt to lose heart, because we are working in our strength and judging by our expectations. Let us listen to the message: ‘O ye children of the resurrection life, be ye always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye *know* your labour is not in vain in the Lord.’ ‘Let not your hands be weak; your work shall be rewarded.’ ‘You know that your labour is not vain in the Lord.’

‘In the Lord.’ The expression is a significant one. Study it in Romans 16 where it occurs ten times, where Paul uses the expressions: ‘Receive here in the Lord;’ ‘my fellow-worker in Christ Jesus;’ ‘who are in Christ, in the Lord;’ ‘beloved in the Lord;’ ‘approved in Christ;’ ‘who labour in the Lord;’ ‘chosen in the Lord.’ The whole life and fellowship and service of these saints had the one mark—they were, their labours were, in the Lord. Here is the secret of effectual service. Your labour is not ‘in vain *in the Lord*.’ As a sense of His presence and the power of His life is maintained, as all works are wrought in Him, His strength works in our weak- ness; our labour cannot be in vain in the Lord. Christ said: ‘He that abideth *in Me*, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.’ Oh! let not the children of this world, with their confidence that the masters whose work they are doing will certainly give them their due reward, put the children of light to shame. Let us rejoice and labour in the confident faith of the word: ‘Your labour is not in vain in the Lord. Wherefore, beloved brethren, be ye always abounding in the work of the Lord.’

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

XIV

Abounding Grace for Abounding Work

'And God is able to make all grace abound unto you, that ye may *abound unto every good work.*'—2 Cor. 9:8.

In our previous meditation we had the great motive to abounding work—the spirit of triumphant joy which Christ's resurrection inspires as it covers the past and the future. Our text to-day assures us that for this abounding work we have the ability provided: God is able to make all grace abound, that we may abound to all good works. Every thought of abounding grace is to be connected with the abounding in good works for which it is given. And every thought of abounding work is to be connected with the abounding grace that fits for it.

Abounding grace has *abounding work for its aim*. It is often thought that grace and good works are at variance with each other. This is not so. What Scripture calls the works of the law, our own works, the works of righteousness which we have done, dead works—works by which we seek to merit or to be made fit for God's favour, these are indeed the very opposite of grace. But they are also the very opposite of the good works which spring from grace, and for which alone grace is bestowed. As irreconcilable as are the works of the law with the freedom of grace, so essential and indispensable are the works of faith, good works, to the true Christian life. God makes grace to abound, that good works may abound. The measure of true grace is tested and proved by the measure of good works. God's grace abounds in us that we may abound in good works. We need to have the truth deeply rooted in us: Abounding grace has *abounding work for its aim.*

And abounding work needs *abounding grace as its source and strength*. There often is abounding work without abounding grace. Just as any man may be very diligent in an earthly pursuit, or a heathen in his religious service of an idol, so men may be very diligent in doing religious work in their own strength, with but little thought of that grace which alone can do true, spiritual effective work. For all work that is to be really acceptable to God, and truly fruitful, not only for some visible result here on earth, but for eternity, the grace of God is indispensable. Paul continually speaks of his own work as owing everything to the grace of God working in him: 'I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me' (1 Cor. 15:10). 'According to the gift of that grace of God which was given me according to the working of His power' (Eph. 3:7). And he as frequently calls upon Christians to exercise their gifts 'according to the grace that was given us' (Rom. 12:6). 'The grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ' (Eph. 4:7). It is only by the grace of God working in us that we can do what are truly good works. It is only as we seek and receive abounding grace that we can abound in every good work.

'God is able to make all grace abound unto you, that ye may abound in all good works.' With what thanksgiving every Christian ought to praise God for the abounding grace that is thus provided for him. And with what humiliation to confess that the experience of, and the surrender to, that abounding grace has been so defective. And with what confidence to believe that a life abounding in good works is indeed possible, because the abounding grace for it is so sure and so Divinely sufficient.

And then, with what simple childlike dependence to wait upon God day by day to receive the more grace which

He gives to the humble.

Child of God! do take time to study and truly apprehend God's purpose with you, *that you abound in every good work!* He means it! He has provided for it! Make the measure of your consecration to Him nothing less than His purpose for you. And claim, then, nothing less than the abounding grace He is able to bestow. Make His omnipotence and His faithfulness your confidence. And live ever in the practice of continual prayer and dependence upon His power working in you. This will make you abound in every good work. According to your faith be it unto you.

Christian worker, learn here the secret of all failure and all success. Work in our own strength, with little prayer and waiting on God for His spirit, is the cause of failure. The cultivation of the spirit of absolute impotence and unceasing dependence will open the heart for the workings of the abounding grace. We shall learn to ascribe all we do to God's grace. We shall learn to measure all we have to do by God's grace. And our life will increasingly be in the joy of God's making His grace to abound in us, and our abounding in every good work.

1. 'That ye may abound to every good work.' Pray over this now till you feel that this is what God has prepared for you.

2. If your ignorance and feebleness appear to make it impossible, present yourself to God, and say you are willing, if He will enable you to abound in good works, to be a branch that brings forth much fruit.

3. Take into your heart, as a living seed, the precious truth: God is able to make all grace abound in you. Trust His power and His faithfulness (Rom. 4:20, 21 ; 1 Thess. 5:24).

4. Begin at once by doing lowly deeds of love. As the little child in the kindergarten. *Learn by doing.*

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

XV

In the Work of Ministering

'And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto *the work of ministering*, unto the building up of the body of Christ.'—Eph. 4:11, 12.

The object with which Christ when He ascended to heaven bestowed on His servants the various gifts that are mentioned is threefold. Their first aim is—*for the perfecting of the saints.* Believers as saints are to be led on in the pursuit of holiness until they 'stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.' It was for this Epaphras laboured in prayer. It is of this Paul writes: 'Whom we preach, teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man perfect in Christ' (Col. 4:12; 1:28).

This perfecting of the saints is, however, only a means to a higher end: *unto the work of ministering,* to fit all the saints to take their part in the service to which every believer is called. It is the same word as is used in texts as these: 'They ministered to Him of their substance; Ye ministered to the saints and do minister' (Luke 4:30, 8:3; 1 Cor. 16:15; Heb. 6:10; 1 Pet. 4:11).

And this, again, is also a means to a still higher end: *unto the building up of the body of Christ.* As every member of our body takes its part in working for the health and growth and maintenance of the whole, so every member of the body of Christ is to consider it his first great duty to take part in all that can help to build up the body of Christ. And this, whether by the helping and strengthening of those who are already members, or the ingathering of those who are to belong to it. And the great work of the Church is, through its pastors and teachers, so to labour for *the perfecting of the saints* in holiness and love and fitness for service, that every one may take his part in *the work of ministering,* that so, *the body of Christ may be built up* and perfected.

Of the three great objects with which Christ has given His Church apostles and teachers, the work of ministering stands thus in the middle. On the one hand, it is preceded by that on which it absolutely depends—*the perfecting of the saints.* On the other, it is followed by that which it is meant to accomplish—*the building up of the body of Christ.* Every believer without exception, every member of Christ's body, is called to take part in the work of ministering. Let every reader try and realise the sacredness of his holy calling.

Let us learn what the qualification is for our work. 'The perfecting of the saints' prepares them for the 'work of ministering.' It is the lack of true sainthood, of true holiness, that causes such lack and feebleness of service. As Christ's saints are taught and truly learn what conformity to Christ means, a life like his, given up in self-sacrifice for the service and salvation of men, as His humility and love, His separation from the world and devotion to the fallen, are seen to be the very essence and blessedness of the life He gives, the work of ministering, the ministry of love, will become the one thing we live for. Humility and Love—these are the two great virtues of the saint—they are the two great powers for the work of ministering. Humility makes us willing to serve; love makes us wise to know how to do it. Love is inventive; it seeks patiently, and suffers long, until it find a way to reach its object. Humility and love are equally turned away from self and its claims. Let us pray, let the Church labour for 'the

perfecting of the saints' in humility and love, and the Holy Spirit will teach us how to minister.

Let us look at what the great work is the members of Christ have to do. It is to minister to each other. Place yourself at Christ's disposal for service to your fellow Christians. Count yourself their servant. Study their interest. Set yourself actively to promote the welfare of the Christians round you. Selfishness may hesitate, the feeling of feebleness may discourage, sloth and ease may raise difficulties—ask your Lord to reveal to you His will, and give yourself up to it. Round about you there are Christians who are cold and worldly and wandering from their Lord. Begin to think what you can do for them. Accept as the will of the Head that you as a member should care for them. Pray for the Spirit of love. Begin somewhere—only begin, and do not continue hearing and thinking while you do nothing. Begin 'the work of ministering' according to the measure of the grace you have. He will give more grace.

Let us believe in the power that worketh in us as sufficient for all we have to do. As I think of the thumb and finger holding the pen with which I write this, I ask, How is it that during all these seventy years of my life they have always known just to do my will? It was because the life of the head passed into and worked itself out in them. 'He that believeth on Me,' as his Head working in him, 'the works that I do shall he do also.' Faith in Christ, whose strength is made perfect in our weakness' will give the power for all we are called to do.

Let us cry to God that all believers may waken up to the power of this great truth: *Every member of the body is to live wholly for the building up of the body*.

1. To be a true worker the first thing is close, humble fellowship with Christ the Head, to be guided and empowered by Him.

2. The next is humble, loving fellowship with Christ's members serving one another in love.

3. This prepares and fits for service in the world.

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

XVI

According to the Working of each several Part

‘That we may grow up in all things into Him, which is the Head, even Christ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint together supplieth, *according to the working in due measure of each several part,* maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.’—Eph. 4:15, 16.

The Apostle is here speaking of the growth, the increase, the building up of the body. This growth and increase has, as we have seen, a double reference. It includes both the spiritual uniting and strengthening of those who are already members, so as to secure the health of the whole body; and also the increase of the body by the addition of all who are as yet outside of it, and are to be gathered in. Of the former we spoke in the previous chapter—the mutual interdependence of all believers, and the calling to care for each other’s welfare. In this chapter we look at the growth from the other side—the calling of every member of Christ’s body to labour for its increase by the labour of love that seeks to bring in them who are not yet of it. This increase of the body and building up of itself in love can only be by the working in due measure of each several part.

Think of the body of a child; how does it reach the stature of a full-grown man? In no other way but by the working in due measure of every part. As each member takes its part, by the work it does in seeking and taking and assimilating food, the increase is made by its building up itself. Not from without, but from within, comes the work that assures the growth. In no other way can Christ’s body attain to the stature of the fulness of Christ. As it is unto Christ the Head we grow up, and from Christ the Head that the body maketh increase of itself, so it is all through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part. Let us see what this implies.

The body of Christ is to consist of all who believe in Him throughout the world. There is no possible way in which these members of the body can be gathered in, but by the body building itself tip in love. Our Lord has made Himself, as Head, absolutely dependent on His members to do this work. What nature teaches us of our own bodies, Scripture teaches us of Christ’s body. The head of a child may have thought and plans of growth—they will all be vain, except as the members all do their part in securing that growth. Christ Jesus has committed to His Church the growth and increase of His body. He asks and expects that as wholly as He the Head lives for the growth and welfare of the body, every member of His body, the very feeblest, shall do the same, to the building up of the body in love. Every believer is to count it his one duty and blessedness to live and labour for the increase of the body, the ingathering of all who, are to be its members.

What is it that is needed to bring the Church to accept this calling, and to train and help the members of the body to know and fulfil it? One thing. We must see that the new birth and faith, that all insight into truth, with all resolve and surrender and effort to live according to it, is only a preparation for our true work. What is needed is that in every believer Jesus Christ be so formed, so dwell in the heart, that His life in us shall be the impulse and inspiration of our love to the whole body, and our life for it. It is because self occupies the heart that it is so easy and natural and pleasing to care for ourselves. When Jesus Christ lives in us, it will be as easy and natural and

pleasing to live wholly for the body of Christ. As readily and naturally as the thumb and fingers respond to the will and movement of the head will the members of Christ's body respond to the Head, as the body grows up into Him, and from Him maketh increase of itself.

Let us sum up. For the great work the Head is doing in gathering in from throughout the world and building up His body, *He is entirely dependent on the service of the members.* Not only our Lord, but a perishing world is waiting and calling for the Church to awake and give herself wholly to this work—*the perfecting of the number of Christ's members.* Every believer, the very feeblest, must learn to know his calling—*to live with this as the main object of this existence.* This great truth will be revealed to us in power, and obtain the mastery, as *we give ourselves to the work of ministering* according to the grace *we already have.* We may confidently wait *for the full revelation of Christ in its as the power to do all He asks of its.*

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

XVII

Women adorned with Good Work

'Let women *adorn themselves;* not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment; but *through good works.* Let none be enrolled as a widow under threescore years old, *well reported of for good works;* . . . if she hath *diligently followed every good work*.— 1 Tim. 2:10, 5:9, 10.

In the three Pastoral Epistles, written to two young pastors to instruct them in regard to their duties, 'good works' are more frequently mentioned than in Paul's other Epistles. [1] In writing to the Churches, as in a chapter like Romans 12 he mentions the individual good work by name. In writing to the pastors he had to use this expression as a summary of what, both in their own life and their teaching of others, they had to aim at. A minister was to be prepared to every good work, furnished completely to every good work, an ensample of good works. And they were to teach Christians—the women to adorn themselves with good works, diligently to follow every good work, to be well reported of for good works; the men to be rich in good works, zealous of good works, ready to every good work, to be careful and to learn to maintain good works. No portion of God's work presses home more definitely the absolute necessity of good works as an essential, vital element in the Christian life.

Our two texts speak of the good works of Christian women. In the first they are taught that their adorning is to be not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment, but, as becomes women preferring godliness, with good works. We know what adornment is. A leafless tree in winter has life; when spring comes it puts on its beautiful garments, and rejoices in the adornment of foliage and blossom. The adorning of Christian women is not to be in hair or pearls or raiment, but in good works. Whether it be the good works that have reference to personal duty and conduct, or those works of beneficence that aim at the pleasing and helping of our neighbor or those that more definitely seek the salvation of souls—the adorning that pleases God, that gives true heavenly beauty, that will truly attract others to come and serve God, too, is what Christian women ought to seek after. John saw the holy city descend from heaven, 'made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.' 'The fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints' (Rev. 21:2, 24:8). Oh! that every Christian woman might seek so to adorn herself as to please the Lord that loved her.

In the second passage we read of widows who were placed upon a roll of honour in the early Church, and to whom a certain charge was given over the younger women. No one was to be enrolled who was not 'well reported of for good works.' Some of these are mentioned: if she has been known for the careful bringing up of her children, for her hospitality to strangers, for her washing the saints' feet, for her relieving the afflicted; and then there is added, 'if she hath *diligently followed every good work.*' If in her home and out of it, in caring for her own children, for strangers, for saints, for the afflicted, her life has been devoted to good works, she may indeed be counted fit to be an example and guide to others. The standard is a high one. It shows us the place good works took in the early Church. It shows how woman's blessed ministry of love was counted on and encouraged. It shows how, in the development of the Christian life, nothing so fits for rule and influence as a life given to good works.

Good works are part and parcel of the Christian life, equally indispensable to the health and growth of the individual, and to the welfare and extension of the Church. And yet what multitudes of Christian women there are whose active share in the good work of blessing their fellow-creatures is little more than playing at good works. They are waiting for the preaching of a full gospel, which shall encourage and help and compel them to give their lives so to work for their Lord, that they, too, may be well reported of as diligently following every good work. The time and money, the thought and heart given to jewels or costly raiment will be redeemed to its true object. Religion will no longer be a selfish desire for personal safety, but the joy of being like Christ, the helper and saviour of the needy. Work for Christ will take its true place as indeed the highest form of existence, the true adornment of the Christian life. And as diligence in the pursuits of earth is honoured as one of the true elements of character and worth, diligently to follow good works in Christ's service will be found to give access to the highest reward and the fullest joy of the Lord.

1. We are beginning to awaken to the wonderful place woman can take in church and school and mission. This truth needs to be brought home to every one of the King's daughters, that the adorning in which they are to attract the world, to please their Lord, and enter His presence is—good works.

2. Woman, as the image of 'the weakness of God,' 'the meekness and gentleness of Christ,' is to teach man the beauty and the power of the long-suffering, self -sacrificing ministry of love.

3. The training for the service of love begins in the home life; is strengthened in the inner chamber; reaches out to the needy around, and finds its full scope in the world for which Christ died.

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[1] This thought is very strikingly put in a penny tract, *One by One*, to be obtained from the author, Mr. Thomas Hogben, Welcome Mission, Portsmouth.

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

XVIII

Rich in Good Works

‘Charge them that are rich in the present world, that they do good, that they be *rich* in *good works*, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed.’—1 Tim. 6:18.

If women are to regard good work as their adornment, men are to count them their riches. As good works satisfy woman’s eye and taste for beauty, they meet man’s craving for possession and power. In the present world riches have a wonderful significance. They are often God’s reward on diligence, industry, and enterprise. They represent and embody the life-power that has been spent in procuring them. As such they exercise power in the honour or service they secure from others. Their danger consists in their being of this world, in their drawing off the heart from the living God and the heavenly treasures. They may become a man’s deadliest enemy: How hardly shall they that have riches enter the kingdom of heaven!

The gospel never takes away anything from us without giving us something better in its stead. It meets the desire for riches by the command to be rich in good works. Good works are the coin that is current in God’s kingdom: according to these will be the reward in the world to come. By abounding in good works we lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven. Even here on earth they constitute a treasure, in the testimony of a good conscience, in the consciousness of being well-pleasing to God (1 John 3) in the power of blessing others.

There is more. Wealth of gold is not only a symbol of the heavenly riches; it is actually, though so opposite in its nature, a means to it. ‘Charge the rich that they do good, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up for themselves a good foundation.’ ‘Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles.’ Even as the widow’s mite, the gifts of the rich, when given in the same spirit, may be an offering with which God is well pleased (Heb. 13:16). The man who is rich in money may become rich in good works, if he follows out the instructions Scripture lays down. The money must not be given to be seen of men ‘but as unto the Lord. Nor as from an owner, but a steward who administers the Lord’s money, with prayer for His guidance. Nor with any confidence in its power or influence, but in deep dependence on Him who alone can make it a blessing. Nor as a substitute for, or bringing out from that personal work and witness, which each believer is to give. As all Christian work, so our money-giving has its value alone from the spirit in which it is done, even the spirit of Christ Jesus.

What a field there is in the world for accumulating these riches, these heavenly treasures. In relieving the poor, in educating the neglected, in helping the lost, in bringing the gospel to Christians and heathen in darkness, what investment might be made if Christians sought to be rich in good works, rich toward God. We may well ask the question, ‘What can be done to waken among believers a desire for these true riches? Men have made a science of the wealth of nations, and carefully studied all the laws by which its increase and universal distribution can be promoted. How can the charge to be rich in good works find a response in the hearts that its pursuit shall be as much a pleasure and a passion as the desire for the riches of the present world?

All depends upon the nature, the spirit, there is in man. To the earthly nature, earthly riches have a natural affinity and irresistible attraction. To foster the desire for the acquisition of what constitutes wealth in the heavenly kingdom, we must appeal to the spiritual nature. That spiritual nature needs to be taught and educated and trained into all the business habits that go to make a man rich. There must be the ambition to rise above the level of a bare existence, the deadly contentment with just being saved. There must be some insight into the beauty and worth of good works as the expression of the Divine life—God's working in us and our working in Him; as the means of bringing glory to God; as the source of life and blessing to men; as the laying up of a treasure in heaven for eternity. There must be a faith that these riches are actually within our reach, because the grace and Spirit of God are working in us. And then the outlook for every opportunity of doing the work of God to those around us, in the footsteps of Him who said, 'It is more blessed to give than receive.' Study and apply these principles—they will open the sure road to your becoming a rich man. A man who wants to be rich often begins on a small scale, but never loses an opportunity. Begin at once with some work of love, and ask Christ, who became poor, *that you might be rich,* to help you.

1. What is the cause that the appeal for money for missions meets with such insufficient response? It is because of the low spiritual state of the Church. Christians have no due conception of their calling to live wholly for God and His kingdom.

2. How can the evil be remedied? Only when believers see and accept their Divine calling to make God's kingdom their first care, and with humble confession of their sins yield themselves to God, will they truly seek the heavenly riches to be found in working for God.

3. Let us never cease to plead and labour for a true spiritual awakening throughout the Church.

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

XIX

Prepared unto every Good Work

'If a man therefore cleanse himself from them, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, meet for the Master's use*, prepared unto every good work.'*—2 Tim. 2:21.

Paul had spoken of the foundation of God standing sure (2:19), of the Church as the great house built upon that foundation, of vessels, not only of gold, silver, costly and lasting, vessels to honour, but also of wood and of earth, common and perishable, vessels to dishonour. He distinguishes between them of whom he had spoken, who gave themselves to striving about words and to vain babblings, and such as truly sought to depart from all iniquity. In our text he gives us the four steps in the path in which a man can become a vessel unto honour in the great household of God. These are, the cleansing from sin; the being sanctified; the meetness for the Master to use as He will; and last, the spirit of preparedness for every good work. It is not enough that we desire or attempt to do good works. As we need training and care to prepare us for every work we are to do on earth, we need it no less, or rather we need it much more, to be—what constitutes the chief mark of the vessels unto honour—to be prepared unto every good work.

'If a man cleanse himself from them'—from that which characterises the vessels of dishonour—the empty profession leading to ungodliness, against which he had warned. In every dish and cup we use, how we insist upon it that it shall be clean. In God's house the vessels must much more be clean. And every one who would be truly prepared unto every good work must see to this first of all, that he cleanse himself from all that is sin. Christ Himself could not enter upon His saving work in heaven until He had accomplished the cleansing of our sins. How can we become partners in His work, unless there be with us the same cleansing first. Ere Isaiah could say, 'Here am I, send me,' the fire of heaven had touched his lips, and he heard the voice, 'Thy sin is purged.' An intense desire to be cleansed from every sin lies at the root of fitness for true service.

'He shall be a vessel of honour, sanctified.' Cleansing is the negative side, the emptying out and removal of all that is impure. *Sanctified,* the positive side, the refilling and being possessed of the spirit of holiness, through whom the soul becomes God-possessed, and so partakes of His holiness. 'Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit'—this first, then, and so 'perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.' In the temple the vessels were not only to be clean, but holy, devoted to God's service alone. He that would truly work for God must follow after holiness; 'a heart established in holiness' (1 Thess. 4:14), a holy habit of mind and disposition, yielded up to God and marked by a sense of His presence, fit for God's work. The cleansing from sin secures the filling with the Spirit.

'Meet for the Master's use.' We are vessels for our Lord to use. In every work we do, it is to be Christ using us and working through us. The sense of being a servant, dependent on the Master's guidance, working under the Master's eye, instruments used by Him and His mighty power, lies at the root of effectual service. It maintains that unbroken dependence, that quiet faith, through which the Lord can do His work. It keeps up that blessed consciousness of the work being all His, which leads the worker to become the humbler the more be is used. His one desire is—meet for the Master's use.

‘Prepared unto every good work.’ Prepared. The word not only means equipment, fitness, but also the disposition, the alacrity which keeps a man on the outlook, and makes him earnestly desire and joyfully avail himself of every opportunity of doing his Master’s work. As he lives in touch with his Lord Jesus, and holds himself as a cleansed and sanctified vessel, ready for Him to use, and he sees how good works are what he was redeemed for, and what his fellowship with his Lord is to be proved in, they become the one thing he is to live for. He is prepared unto every good work.

1. ‘Meet for the Master’s use,’ that is the central thought. A personal relation to Christ, an entire surrender to His disposal, a dependent waiting to be used by Him, a joyful confidence that He will use us—such is the secret of true work.

2. Let the beginning of your work be a giving yourself into the hands of the Master, as your living, loving Lord.

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

XX

Furnished completely unto every Good Work

‘Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, *a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,* handling aright *the word of truth.’*—2 Tim. 2:15.

‘*Every scripture* inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which *is* in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, *furnished completely unto every good work.’*—2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

A workman that needeth not to be ashamed is one who is not afraid to have the master come and inspect his work. In hearty devotion to it, in thoroughness and skill, he presents himself approved to him who employs him. God’s workers are to give diligence to present themselves approved to Him; to have their work worthy of Him unto all well-pleasing. They are to be as a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. A workman is one who knows his work, who gives himself wholly to it, who is known as a working man, who takes delight in doing his work well. Such every Christian minister, every Christian worker, is to be—a workman that makes a study of it to invite and expect the Master’s approval.

‘Handling aright the word of truth.’ The word is a seed, a fire, a hammer, a sword, is bread, is light. Workmen in any of these spheres can be our example. In work for God everything depends upon handling the word aright. Therefore it is that, in the second text quoted above, the personal subjection to the word, and the experience of its power, is spoken of as the one means of our being completely furnished to every good work. God’s workers must know that the Scripture is inspired of God, and has the life and life-giving power of God in it. Inspired is Spirit-breathed—the life in a seed, God’s Holy Spirit is in the word. The Spirit in the word and the Spirit in our heart is One. As by the power of the Spirit within us we take the Spirit-filled word we become spiritual men. This word is given *for teaching,* the revelation of the thoughts of God; *for reproof,* the discovery of our sins and mistakes; *for correction,* the removal of what is defective to be replaced by what is right and good; *for instruction which is in righteousness,* the communication of all the knowledge needed to walk before God in His ways. As one yields himself wholly and heartily to all this, and the true Spirit-filled word gets mastery of his whole being, he becomes a man of God, complete and furnished completely to every good work. He becomes a workman approved of God, who needs not to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of God. And so the man of God has the double mark—his own life wholly moulded by the Spirit-breathed word—and his whole work directed by his rightly handling that word.

‘That the man of God may be complete, thoroughly furnished unto every good work.’ In our previous meditation we learnt bow in the cleansing and sanctification of the personal life the worker becomes a vessel *meet for the Masters use, prepared unto every good work.* Here we learn the same lesson—it is the man of God who allows God’s word to do its work of reproving and correcting and instructing in his own life who will be *complete, completely furnished unto every good work.* Complete equipment and readiness for every good work—that is what every worker for God must aim at.

If any worker, conscious of how defective his preparation is, ask how this complete furnishing for every good work is to be attained, the analogy of an earthly workman, who needs not be ashamed, suggests the answer. He would tell us that be owes his success, first of all, to devotion to his work. He gave it his close attention. He left other things to concentrate his efforts on mastering one thing. He made it a life-study to do his work perfectly. They who would do Christ's work as a second thing, not as the first, and who are not willing to sacrifice all for it, will never be complete or completely furnished to every good work.

The second thing he will speak of will be patient training and exercise. Proficiency only comes through painstaking effort. You may feel as if you know not how or what to work aright. Fear not—all learning begins with ignorance and mistakes. Be of good courage. He who has endowed human nature with the wonderful power that has filled the world with such skilled and cunning workmen, will He not much more give His children the grace they need to be His fellow-workers? Let the necessity that is laid upon you—the necessity that you should glorify God, that you should bless the world, that you should through work ennoble and perfect your life and blessedness, urge you to give immediate and continual diligence to be a workman completely furnished unto every good work.

It is only in doing we learn to do aright. Begin working under Christ's training; He will perfect His work in you, and so fit you for your work for him.

1. The work God is doing, and seeking to have done in the world, is to win it back to Himself.

2. In this work every believer is expected to take part.

3. God wants us to be skilled workmen, who give our whole heart to His work, and delight in it.

4. God does His work by working in us, inspiring and strengthening us to do His work.

5. What God asks is a heart and life devoted to Him in surrender and faith.

6. As God's work is all love, love is the power that works in us, inspiring our efforts and conquering its object.

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

XXI

Zealous of Good Works

'He gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us for Himself, a people of His own, *zealous of good works.'*—Tit. 2:14.

In these words we have two truths—what Christ has done to make us His own, and what He expects of us. In the former we have a rich and beautiful summary of Christ's work for us: He gave *Himself for us,* He redeemed us *from all iniquity,* He cleansed *us for Himself,* He took us for a people, *for His own possession.* And all with the one object, that we should be a people *zealous of good works.* The doctrinal half of this wonderful passage has had much attention bestowed on it; let us devote our attention to its practical part-—we are to be a people zealous of good works. Christ expects of us that we shall be zealots for good works—ardently, enthusiastically devoted to their performance.

This cannot be said to be the feeling with which most Christians regard good works. What can be done to cultivate this disposition? One of the first things that wakens zeal in work is a great and urgent sense of need. A great need wakens strong desire, stirs the heart and the will, rouses all the energies of our being. It was this sense of need that roused many to be zealous of the law; they hoped their works would save them. The Gospel has robbed this motive of its power. Has it taken away entirely the need of good works? No, indeed, it has given that urgent need a higher place than before. Christ needs, needs urgently, our good works. We are His servants, the members of His body, without whom He cannot possibly carry on His work on earth. The work is so great—with the hundreds of millions of the unsaved—the work is so great, that not one worker can be spared. There are thousands of Christians to-day who feel that their own business is urgent, and must be attended to, and have no conception of the urgency of Christ's work committed to them. The Church must waken up to teach each believer this.

As urgently as Christ needs our good works the world needs them. There are around you men and women and children who need saving. To see men swept down past us in a river, stirs our every power to try and save them. Christ has placed His people in a perishing world, with the expectation that they will give themselves, heart and soul, to carry on His work of love. Oh! let us sound forth the blessed Gospel message: He gave Himself for us that He might redeem us for Himself, a people of His own, to serve Him and carry on His work—zealous of good works.

A second great element of zeal in work is delight in it. An apprentice or a student mostly begins his work under a sense of duty. As he learns to understand and enjoy it, be does it with pleasure, and becomes zealous in its performance. The Church must train Christians to believe that when once we give our hearts to it, and seek for the training that makes us in some degree skilled workmen, there is no greater joy than that of sharing in Christ's work of mercy and beneficence. As physical and mental activity give pleasure, and call for the devotion and zeal of thousands, the spiritual service of Christ can waken our highest enthusiasm.

Then comes the highest motive, the personal one of attachment to Christ our Redeemer: 'The love of Christ

constraineth us.' The love of Christ to us is the source and measure of our love to Him. Our love to Him becomes the power and the measure of our love to souls. This love, shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, this love as a Divine communication, renewed in us by the renewing of the Holy Ghost day by day, becomes a zeal for Christ that shows itself as a zeal for good works. It becomes the link that unites the two parts of our text, the doctrinal and the practical, into one. Christ's love, that gave Himself for us, that redeemed us from all iniquity, that cleansed us for Himself, that made us a people of His own in the bonds of an everlasting loving kindness, that love believed in, known, received into the heart, makes the redeemed soul of necessity zealous in good works.

'Zealous of good works!' Let no believer, the youngest, the feeblest, look upon this grace as too high. It is Divine, provided for and assured in the love of our Lord. Let us accept it as our calling. Let us be sure it is the very nature of the new life within us. Let us, in opposition to all that nature or feeling may say, in faith claim it as an integral part of our redemption—Christ Himself will make it true in us.

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

XXII

Ready to every Good Work

‘Put them in mind to be *ready to every good work.’*—Tit. 3:1.

‘Put them in mind.’ The words suggest the need of believers to have the truths of their calling to good works ever again set before them. A healthy tree spontaneously bears its fruit. Even where the life of the believer is in perfect health, Scripture teaches us how its growth and fruitfulness only come through teaching, and the influence that exerts on mind and will and heart. For all who have charge of others the need is great of Divine wisdom and faithfulness to teach and train all Christians, specially young and feeble Christians, to be ready to every good work. Let us consider some of the chief points of such training.

Teach them clearly what good works are. Lay the foundation in the will of God, as revealed in the law, and show them how integrity and righteousness and obedience are the groundwork of Christian character. Teach them how in all the duties and relationships of daily life true religion is to be carried out. Lead them on to the virtues which Jesus specially came to exhibit and teach—humility, meekness and gentleness and love. Open out to them the meaning of a life of love, self-sacrifice, and beneficence—entirely given to think of and care for others. And then carry them on to what is the highest, the true life of good works—the winning of men to know and love God.

Teach them what an essential part of the Christian life good works are. They are not, as many think, a secondary element in the salvation which God gives. They are not merely to be done in token of our gratitude, or as a proof of the sincerity of our faith, or as a preparation for heaven. They are all this, but they are a great deal more. They are the very object for which we have been redeemed: we have been created anew unto good works. They alone are the evidence that man has been restored to his original destiny of working as God Works, and with God, and because God works through him. God has no higher glory than His works, and specially His work of saving love. In becoming imitators of God, and walking and working in love, even as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us, we have the very image and likeness of God restored in us. The works of a man not only reveal his life, they develop and exercise, they strengthen and perfect it. Good works are of the very essence of the Divine life in us.

Teach them, too, what a rich reward they bring. All labour has its market value. From the poor man who scarce can earn a shilling a day, to the man who has made his millions, the thought of the reward there is for labour has been one of the great incentives to undertake it. Christ appeals to this feeling when He says, ‘Great shall be your reward.’ Let Christians understand that there is no service where the reward is so rich as that of God. Work is bracing, work is strength, and cultivates the sense of mastery and conquest. Work wakens enthusiasm and calls out a man’s noblest qualities. In a life of good works the Christian becomes conscious of his Divine ministry of dispensing the life and grace of God to others. They bring us into closer union with God. There is no higher fellowship with God than fellowship in His saving work of love. It brings us into sympathy with Him and His purposes; it fills us with His love; it secures His approval. And great is the reward, too, on those around us. When others are won to Christ, when the weary and the erring and the desponding are helped and made partakers of the grace and life there are in Christ Jesus for them, God’s servants share in the very joy in which our blessed Lord found His recompense.

And now the chief thing. *Teach them to believe that it is possible for each of us to abound in good works.* Nothing is so fatal to successful effort as discouragement or despondency. Nothing is more a frequent cause of neglect of good works than the fear that we have not the power to perform them. Put them in mind of the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. Show them that God's promise and provision of strength is always equal to what He demands; that there is always grace sufficient for all the good works to which we are called. Strive to waken in them a faith in 'the power that worketh in us,' and in the fulness of that life which can flow out as rivers of living water. Train them to begin at once their service of love. Lead them to see how it is all God working in them, and to offer themselves as empty vessels to be filled with His love and grace. And teach them that as they are faithful in a little, even amid mistakes and shortcomings, the acting out of the life will strengthen the life itself, and work for God will become in full truth a second nature.

God grant that the teachers of the Church may be faithful to its commission in regard to all her members—'Put them in mind to be ready for every good work.' Not only teach them, but train them. Show them the work there is to be done by them; see that they do it; encourage and help them to do it hopefully. There is no part of the office of a pastor more important or more sacred than this, or fraught with richer blessing. Let the aim be nothing less than to lead every believer to live entirely devoted to the work of God in winning men to Him. What a change it would make in the Church and the world!

1. Get a firm hold of the great root-principle. Every believer, every member of Christ's body, has his place in the body solely for the welfare of the whole body.

2. Pastors have been given for the perfecting of the saints with the work of ministering, of serving in love.

3. In ministers and members of the churches, Christ will work mightily if they will wait upon Him.

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

XXIII

Careful to maintain Good Works

'I will that thou affirm these things confidently, to the end that they which have believed God may be *careful to maintain good works.* Let our people also *learn to maintain good works* for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.'—Tit. 3:8, 14.

In the former of these passages Paul charges Titus confidently to affirm the truths of the blessed Gospel to the end, with the express object that all who had believed *should be careful,* should make a study of it, *to maintain good works.* Faith and good works were to be inseparable; the diligence of every believer in good works was to be a main aim of a pastor's work. In the second passage he reiterates the instruction, with the expression, *let them learn,* suggesting the thought that, as all work on earth has to be learned, so in the good works of the Christian life there is an equal need of thought and application and teachableness, to learn how to do them aright and abundantly.

There may be more than one reader of this little book who has felt how little he has lived in accordance with all the teaching of God's word, prepared, thoroughly furnished, ready unto, zealous of good works. It appears so difficult to get rid of old habits, to break through the conventionalities of society, to know how to begin and really enter upon a life that can be full of good works, to the glory of God. Let me try and give some suggestions that may be helpful. They may also aid those who have the training of Christian workers, in showing in what way the teaching and learning of good works may best succeed. Come, young workers all, and listen.

1. A learner must begin by beginning to work at once. There is no way of learning an art like swimming or music, a new language or a trade, but by practice. Let neither the fear that you cannot do it, nor the hope that something will happen that will make it easier for you, keep you back. Learn to do good works, the works of love, by beginning to do them. However insignificant they appear, do them. A kind word, a little help to some one in trouble, an act of loving attention to a stranger or a poor man, the sacrifice of a seat or a place to some one who longs for it—practise these things. All plants we cultivate are small at first. Cherish the consciousness that, for Jesus' sake, you are seeking to do what would please Him. It is only in doing you can learn to do.

2. The learner must give his heart to the work, must take interest and pleasure in it. Delight in work ensures success. Let the tens of thousands around you in the world who throw their whole soul into their daily business, teach you how to serve your blessed Master. Think sometimes of the honour and privilege of doing good works, of serving others in love. It is God's own work, to love and save and bless men. He works it in you and through you. It makes you share the spirit and likeness of Christ. It strengthens your Christian character. Without actions, intentions lower and condemn a man instead of raising him. Only as much as you act out, do you really live. Think of the Godlike blessedness of doing good, of communicating life, of making happy. Think of the exquisite joy of growing up into a life of beneficence, and being the blessing of all you meet. Set your heart upon being a vessel meet for the Master's use, ready to every good work.

3 . Be of good courage, and fear not. The learner who says I cannot, will surely fail. There is a Divine power

working in you. Study and believe what God's word says about it. Let the holy self-reliance of St. Paul, grounded on his reliance on Christ, be your example: I can do all things—in Christ which strengtheneth me. Study and take home to yourself the wonderful promises about the power of the Holy Spirit, the abundance of grace, Christ's strength made perfect in weakness, and see how all this can only be made true to you in *working*. Cultivate the noble consciousness that as you have been created to good works by God, He Himself will fit you for them. And believe then that just as natural as it is to any workman to delight and succeed in his profession, it can be to the new nature in you to abound in every good work. Having this confidence, you need never faint.

4. Above all, cling to your Lord Jesus as your Teacher and Master. He said: 'Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls.' Work as one who is a learner in His school, who is sure that none teaches like Him, and is therefore confident of success. Cling to Him, and let a sense of His presence and His power working in you make you meek and lowly, and yet bold and strong. He who came to do the Father's work on earth, and found it the path to the Father's glory, will teach you what it is to work for God.

To sum up again, for the sake of any who want to learn how to work, or how to work better:

1. Yield yourself to Christ. Lay yourself on the altar, and say you wish to give yourself wholly to live for God's work.

2. Believe quietly that Christ accepts and takes charge of you for His work, and will fit you for it.

3. Pray much that God would open to you the great truth of His own working in you. Nothing else can give true strength.

4. Seek to cultivate a spirit of humble, patient, trustful dependence upon God. Live in loving fellowship with Christ, and obedience to Him. You can count upon His strength being made perfect in your weakness.

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

XXIV

As His Fellow-Workers

'We are God's *fellow-workers:* ye are God's building.'—1 Cor. 3:9.

'And *working together with Him* we intreat that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.'—2 Cor. 6:1.

We have listened to Paul's teaching on good works (chaps. IX.-XXII.); let us turn now to his personal experience, and see if we can learn from him some of the secrets of effective service.

He speaks here of the Church as God's building, which, as the Great Architect, He is building up into a holy temple and dwelling for Himself. Of his own work, Paul speaks as of that of a master builder, to whom a part of the great building has been given in charge. He had laid a foundation in Corinth; to all who were working there he said: 'Let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon.' 'We are God's fellowworkers.' The word is applicable not only to Paul, but to all God's servants who take part in His work; and because every believer has been called to give his life to God's service and to win others to His knowledge, every, even the feeblest, Christian needs to have the word brought to him and taken home: 'We are God's fellowworkers.' How much it suggests in regard to our working for God!

As to the work we have to do.—The eternal God is building for Himself a temple; Christ Jesus, God's Son, is the foundation; believers are the living stones. The Holy Spirit is the mighty power of God through which believers are gathered out of the world made fit for their place in the temple, and built up into it. As living stones, believers are at the same time the living workmen, whom God uses to carry out His work. They are equally God's workmanship and God's fellow-workers. The work God is doing He does through them. The work they have to do is the very work God is doing. God's own work, in which He delights, on which His heart is set, is saving men and building them into His temple. This is the one work on which the heart of every one who would be a fellow-worker with God must be set. It is only as we know how great, how wonderful, this work of God is—giving life to dead souls, imparting His own life to them, and living in them—that we shall enter somewhat into the glory of our work, receiving the very life of God from Him, and passing it on to men.

As to the strength for the work.—Paul says of his work as a mere master builder, that it was 'according to the grace of God which was given me.' For Divine work nothing but Divine power suffices. The power by which God works must work in us. That power is His Holy, Spirit. Study the second chapter of this Epistle, and the third of the Second, and see how absolute was Paul's acknowledgment of his own impotence, and his dependence on the teaching and power of the Holy Spirit. As this great truth begins to live in the hearts of God's workers, that God's work can only be done by God's power in us, we shall feel that our first need every day is to have the presence of God's Spirit renewed within us. The power of the Holy Spirit is the power of love. God is love. All He works for the salvation of men is love; it is love alone that truly conquers and wins the heart. In all God's

fellow-workers love is the power that reaches the hearts of men. Christ conquered and conquers still by the love of the cross. Let that mind be in you, O worker, which was in Christ Jesus, the spirit of a love that sacrifices itself to the death, of a humble, patient, gentle love, and you will be made meet to be God's fellow-worker.

As to the relation we are to hold to God.—In executing the plans of some great building the master builder has but one care—to carry out to the minutest detail the thoughts of the architect who designed it. He acts in constant consultation with him, and is guided in all by his will; and his instructions to those under him have all reference to the one thing—the embodiment, in visible shape, of what the master mind has conceived. The one great characteristic of fellow-workers with God ought to be that of absolute surrender to His will, unceasing dependence on His teaching, exact obedience to His wishes. God has revealed His plan in His Word. He has told us that His Spirit alone can enable us to enter into His plans, and fully master His purpose with the way he desires to have it carried out. The clearer our insight into the Divine glory of God's work of saving souls, into the utter insufficiency of our natural powers to do the work, into the provision, that has been made by which the Divine love can animate us, and the Divine Spirit guide and strengthen us for its due performance, the more we shall feel that a childlike teachableness, a continual looking upward and waiting on God, is ever to be the chief mark of one who is His fellow-labourer. Out of the sense of humility, helplessness, and nothingness there will grow a holy confidence and courage that knows that our weakness need not hinder us, that Christ's strength is made perfect in weakness, that God Himself is working out His purpose through us. And of all the blessings of the Christian life, the most wonderful will be that we are allowed to be—God's fellow-workers!

1. God's fellow-worker! How easy to use the word, and even to apprehend some of the great truths it contains! How little we live in the power and the glory of what it actually involves!

2. Fellow-workers with God! Everything depends upon knowing, in His holiness and love, the God with whom we are associated as partners.

3. He who has chosen us, that in and through us He might do His great work, will fit us for His use.

4. Let our posture be adoring worship, deep dependence, great waiting, full obedience.

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

XXV

According to the Working of His Power

'Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus; whereunto I also labour, striving *according to His working, which worketh in me mightily.'*—Col. 1:29.

'The mystery of Christ, whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of that grace of God which was given me *according to the working of His power.'*—Eph. 3:7.

In the words of Paul to the Philippians, which we have already considered (Chap. IX.), in which he called upon them and encouraged them to work, because it was God who worked in them, we found one of the most pregnant and comprehensive statements of the great truth that it is only by God's working in us that we can do true work. In our texts for this chapter we have Paul's testimony as to his own experience. His whole ministry was to be according to the grace which was given him according to the working of God's power. And of his labour he says that it was a striving according to the power of Him who worked mightily in him.

We find here the same principle we found in our Lord—the Father doing the works in Him. Let every worker who reads this pause, and say—If the ever-blessed Son, if the Apostle Paul, could only do their work according to the working of His power who worked in them mightily, how much more do I need this working of God in me, to fit me for doing His work aright. This is one of the deepest spiritual truths of God's word; let us look to the Holy Spirit within us to give it such a hold of our inmost life, that it may become the deepest inspiration of all our work. I can only do true work as I yield myself to God to work in me.

We know the ground on which this truth rests, 'There is none good but God'; 'There is none holy but the Lord'; 'Power belongeth unto God.' All goodness and holiness and power are only to be found in God, and where He gives them. And He can only give them in the creature, not as something He parts with, but by His own actual presence and dwelling and working. And so God can only work in His people in as far as He is allowed to have complete possession of the heart and life. As our will and life and love are yielded up in dependence and faith, and God is waited on to keep possession and to abide, even as Christ waited on Him, God can work in us.

This is true of all our spiritual life, but specially of our work for God. The work of saving souls is God's own work: none but He can do it. The gift of His Son is the proof of how great and precious He counts the work, and how His heart is set upon it. His love never for one moment ceases working for the salvation of men. And when He calls His children to be partners in His work, He shares with them the joy and the glory of the work of saving and blessing men. He promises to work His work through them, inspiring and energising them by His power working in them. To him who can say with Paul: 'I labour, striving according to His power who worketh in me mightily,' his whole relation to God becomes the counterpart and the continuation of Christ's, a blessed, unceasing, momentary, and most absolute dependence on the Father for every word He spoke and every work He did.

Christ is our pattern. Christ's life is our law and works in us. Christ lived in Paul his life of dependence on God. Why should any of us hesitate to believe that the grace given to Paul of labouring and striving 'according to the working of the power' will be given to us too. Let every worker learn to say—As the power that worked in Christ worked in Paul too, that power works no less in me. There is no possible way of working God's work aright, but by God working it in us.

How I wish that I could take every worker who reads this by the hand, and say—Come, my brother! let us quiet our minds, and hush every thought in God's presence, as I whisper in your ears the wonderful secret: *God is working in you. All the work you have to do for Him, God will work in you.* Take time and think it over. It is a deep spiritual truth which the mind cannot grasp nor the heart realise. Accept it as a Divine truth from heaven; believe that this word is a seed out of which can grow the very spiritual blessing of which it speaks. And in the faith of the Holy Spirit's making it live within you, say ever again: *God worketh in me.* All the work I have to work for Him, God will work in me.

The faith of this truth, and the desire to have it made true in you, will constrain you to live very humbly and closely with God. You will see how work for God must be the most spiritual thing in a spiritual life. And you will ever anew bow in holy stillness: God is working; God will work in me; I will work for Him according to the power which worketh in me mightily.

1. The gift of the grace of God (Eph. 2:7, 3:7), the power that worketh in us (Eph. 3:20), the strengthening with might by the Spirit (Eph. 3:16)—the three expressions all contain the same thought of God's working all in us.

2. The Holy Spirit is the power of God. Seek to be filled with the Spirit, to have your whole life led by Him, and you will become fit for God's working mightily in you.

3. 'Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Spirit coming on you.' Through the Spirit dwelling in us God can work in us mightily.

4. What holy fear, what humble watchfulness and dependence, what entire surrender and obedience become us if we believe in God's working in us.

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

XXVI

Labouring more Abundantly

'By the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed on me was not in vain; but I *laboured more abundantly* than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.'—1 Cor. 15:10.

'And He hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My power is made perfect in weakness. . . . In nothing was I behind the chiefest of the apostles, though I am nothing.'—2 Cor. 12:9, 11 .

In both of these passages Paul speaks of how he had abounded in the work of the Lord. 'In nothing was I behind the chiefest of the Apostles.' 'I laboured more abundantly, than they all.' In both he tells how entirely it was all of God, who worked in Him, and not of himself. In the first he says: 'Not I, but the grace of God which was with me.' And then in the second, showing how this grace is Christ's strength working in us, while we are nothing, he tells us: 'He said unto me: My grace is sufficient for thee: My power is made perfect in weakness.' May God give us 'the Spirit of revelation, enlightened eyes of the heart,' to see this wonderful vision, a man who knows himself to be nothing, glorying in his weakness, that the power of Christ may rest on him, and work through him, and who so labours more abundantly than all. What does this teach us as workers for God[?]

God's work can only be done in God's strength.—It is only by God's power, that is, by God Himself working in us, that we can do effective work. Throughout this little book this truth has been frequently repeated. It is easy to accept of it; it is far from easy to see its full meaning, to give it the mastery over our whole being, to live it out. This will need stillness of soul, and meditation, strong faith and fervent prayer. As it is God alone who can work in us, it is equally God *who alone can reveal Himself as the God who works in us.* Wait on Him, and the truth that ever appears to be beyond thy reach will be opened up to thee, through the knowledge of who and what God is. When God reveals Himself as *'God who worketh all in all,'* thou wilt learn to believe and work 'according to the power of Him who worketh in thee mightily.'

*God's strength can only work in weak*ness.—It is only when we truly say, Not I! that we can fully say, *but the grace of God with me*. The man who said, *In nothing behind the chiefest of the Apostles!* had first learnt to say, *though I am nothing.* He could say: 'I take pleasure in weaknesses, for when I am weak then am I strong.' This is the true relation between the Creator and the creature, between the Divine Father and His child, between God and His servant. Christian worker! learn the lesson of thine own weakness, as the indispensable condition of God's Power working in thee. Do believe that to take time and in God's presence to realise thy weakness and nothingness is the sure way to be clothed with God's strength. Accept every experience by which God teaches thee thy weakness as His grace preparing thee to receive His strength. Take pleasure in weaknesses!

God's strength comes in our fellowship with Christ and His service.—Paul says: I will glory in my weakness, that *the strength of Christ* may rest upon me.' 'I take pleasure in weaknesses *for Christ's sake.'* Andhe tells how it was when be had besought *the Lord* that the messenger of Satan might depart from him, that He answered: 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' 'Christ is the wisdom and the power of God.' We do not receive the wisdom to know, or the power to do God's will as something that we can possess and use at discretion. It is in the personal

attachment to Christ, in a life of continual communication with Him, that His power rests on us. It is in taking pleasure in weaknesses for Christ's sake that Christ's strength is known.

God's strength is given to faith, and the work that is done in faith.—It needs a living faith to take pleasure in weaknesses, and in weakness to do our work, knowing that God is working in us. Without seeing or feeling anything, to go on in the confidence of a hidden power working in us—this is the highest exercise of a life of faith. To do God's own work in saving souls, in per- severing prayer and labour; amid outwardly unfavourable circumstances and appearances still to labour more abundantly—this faith alone can do. Let us be strong in faith, giving glory to God. God will show Himself strong towards him whose heart is perfect with Him.

My brother! be willing to yield yourself to the very utmost to God, that His power may rest upon you, may work in you. *Do let God work through you.* Offer yourself to Him for His work as the one object of your life. Count upon His working all in you, to fit you for His service, to strengthen and bless you in it. Let the faith and love of your Lord Jesus, whose strength is going to be made perfect in your weakness, lead you to live even as He did, to do the Father's will and finish His work.

1. Let every minister seek the full personal experience of Christ's strength made perfect in His weakness: this alone will fit him to teach believers the secret of their strength.

2. Our Lord says: 'My grace, My strength.' It is as, in close personal fellowship and love, we abide in Christ, and have Christ abiding in us, that His grace and strength can work.

3. It is a heart wholly given up to God, to His will and love, that will know his power working in our weakness.

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

XXVII

A Doer that worketh shall be blessed in Doing

'Be ye *doers* of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves. He that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth, but a *doer that worketh,* this man shall be *blessed in doing.'*—Jas. 1:22, 25.

'God created us not to contemplate but to act. He created us in His own image, and in Him there is no Thought without simultaneous Action.' True action is born of contemplation. True contemplation, as a means to an end, always begets action. If sin had not entered there had never been a separation between knowing and doing. In nothing is the power of sin more clearly seen than this, that even in the believer there is such a gap between intellect and conduct. It is possible to delight in hearing, to be diligent in increasing our knowledge of God's word, to admire and approve the truth, even to be willing to do it, and yet to fail entirely in the actual performance. Hence the warning of James, not to delude ourselves with being hearers and not doers. Hence his pronouncing the doer who worketh blessed in his doing.

Blessed in doing.—The words are a summary of the teaching of our Lord Jesus at the close of the Sermon on the Mount: *'He that doeth* the will of My Father shall enter the kingdom of heaven.' 'Every one that heareth My words, *and doeth them,* shall be likened unto a wise man.' To the woman who spoke of the blessedness of her who was his mother: 'Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God *and keep it.'* To the disciples in the last night: 'If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye *do them.'* It is one of the greatest dangers in religion that we rest content with the pleasure and approval which a beautiful representation of a truth calls forth, without the immediate performance of what it demands. It is only when conviction has been translated into conduct that we have proof that the truth is mastering us.

A doer that worketh shall be blessed in doing.—The doer is blessed. The doing is the victory that overcomes every obstacle it brings out and confirms the very image of God, the Great Worker; it removes every barrier to the enjoyment of all the blessing God has prepared. We are ever inclined to <pb n="140" /> seek our blessedness in what God gives, in privilege and enjoyment. Christ placed it in what we do, because it is only in doing that we really prove and know and possess the life God has bestowed. When one said, 'Blessed is be that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God,' our Lord answered with the parable of the supper, 'Blessed is he that forsakes all to come to the supper.' The doer is blessed. As surely as it is only in doing that the painter or musician, the man of science or commerce, the discoverer or the conqueror find their blessedness, so, and much more, is it only in keeping the commandments and in doing the will of God that the believer enters fully into the truth and blessedness of deliverance from sin and fellowship with God. Doing is the very essence of blessedness, the highest manifestation, and therefore the fullest enjoyment of the life of God.

A doer that worketh shall be blessed in doing.—This was the blessedness of Abraham, of whom we read (Jas. 2:22): 'Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect.' He had no works without faith ; there was faith working with them and in them all. And he had no faith without works: through them his faith was exercised and strengthened and perfected. As his faith, so his blessedness was perfected in

doing. It is in *doing* that the doer that worketh is blessed. The true insight into this, as a Divine revelation of the true nature of good works, in perfect harmony with all our experience in the world, will make us take every command, and every truth, and every opportunity to abound in good works as an integral part of the blessedness of the salvation Christ has brought us. Joy and work, work and joy, will become synonymous: we shall no longer be hearers but doers.

Let us put this truth into immediate practice. Let us live for others, to love and serve them. Let not the fact of our being unused to labours of love, or the sense of ignorance and unfitness, keep us back. Only begin. If you think you are not able to labour for souls, begin with the bodies. Only begin, and go on, and abound. Believe the word, It is more blessed to give than to receive. Pray for and depend on the promised grace. Give yourself to a ministry of love; in the very nature of things, in the example of Christ, in the promise of God you have the assurance: If you know these things, *happy are ye if ye do them.* Blessed is the doer!

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

XXVIII

The Work of Soul-Saving

'My brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that *he which converteth a sinner* from the error of his ways shall *save a soul* from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins.'—Jas. 5:19[-20] .

We sometimes hesitate to speak of men being converted and saved by men. Scripture here twice uses the expression of one man converting another, and once of his saving him. Let us not hesitate to accept it as part of our work, of our high prerogative as the sons of God, to convert and to save men. 'For it is God who worketh in us.'

'*Shall save a soul from death.'* Every workman studies the material in which he works: the carpenter the wood, the goldsmith the gold. 'Our works are wrought in God.' In our good works we deal with souls. Even when we can at first do no more than reach and help their bodies, our aim is the soul. For these Christ came to die. For these God has appointed us to watch and labour. Let us study these. What care a huntsman or a fisherman takes to know the habits of the spoil he seeks. Let us remember that it needs Divine wisdom and training and skill to become winners of souls. The only way to get that training and skill is to begin to work: Christ Himself will teach each one who waits on Him

In that training the Church with its ministers has a part to take.. The daily experience of ordinary life and teaching prove how often there exist in a man unsuspected powers, which must be called out by training before they are known to be there. When a man thus becomes conscious and master of the power there is in himself he is, as it were, a new creature; the power and enjoyment of life is doubled. Every believer has bidden within himself the power of saving souls. The Kingdom of Heaven is within us as a seed, and every one of the gifts and graces of the spirit are each also a hidden seed. The highest aim of the ministry is to waken the consciousness of this hidden seed of power to save souls. A depressing sense of ignorance or impotence keeps many back. James writes: 'Let him who converts another *know* that he has saved a soul from death.' Every believer needs to be taught to know and use the wondrous blessed power with which he has been endowed. When God said to Abraham: 'I will bless thee, then shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,' He called him to a faith not only in the blessing that would come to him from above, but in the power of blessing he would be in the world. It is a wonderful moment in the life of a child of God when he sees that the second blessing is as sure as the first.

'He shall save a soul.' Our Lord bears the name of Jesus, Saviour. He is the embodiment of God's saving love. Saving souls is His own great work, is His work alone. As our faith in Him grows to know and receive all there is in Him, as He lives in us, and dwells in our heart and disposition, saving souls will become the great work to which our life will be given. We shall be the willing and intelligent instruments through whom He will do His mighty work.

'If any err, and one convert him he which converteth a sinner shall save a soul.' The words suggest personal work. We chiefly think of large gatherings to whom the Gospel is preached; the thought here is of one who has

erred and is sought after. We increasingly do our work through associations and organisations. ‘If *one* convert him, *he* saveth a soul;’ it is the love and labour of some individual believer that has won the erring one back. It is this we need in the Church of Christ,—every believer who truly follows Jesus Christ looking out for those who are erring from the way, loving them, and labouring to help them back. Not one of us may say, ‘Am I my brother’s keeper?’ We are in the world only and solely that as the members of Christ’s body we may continue and carry out His saving work. As saving souls was and is His work, His joy, His glory, let it be ours, let it be mine, too. Let me give myself personally to watch over individuals, and seek to save them one by one.

‘Know that he which converteth a sinner shall save a soul.’ ‘If ye *know* these things, happy are ye if you *do* them.’ Let me translate these Scripture truths into action; let me give these thoughts shape and substance in daily life; let me prove their power over me, and my faith in them, by *work.* Is there not more than one Christian around me wandering from the way, needing loving help and not unwilling to receive it? Are there not some whom I could take by the hand, and encourage to begin again? Are there not many who have never been in the right way, for some of whom Christ Jesus would use me, if I were truly at His disposal?

If I feel afraid—oh! let me believe that the love of God as a seed dwells within me, not only calling but enabling me actually to do the work. Let me yield myself to the Holy Spirit to fill my heart with that love, and fit me for its service. Jesus the Saviour lives to save; He dwells in me; He will do His saving work through me. *‘Know that he which converteth a sinner shall save a soul from death, and cover a multitude of sins.’*

1. More love to souls, born out of fervent love to the Lord Jesus—is not this our great need?

2. Let us pray for love, and begin to love, in the faith that as we exercise the little we have more will be given.

3. Lord! open our eyes to see Thee doing Thy great work of saving men, and waiting to give Thy love and strength into the heart of every willing one. Make each one of Thy redeemed a soul-winner.

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

XXIX

Praying and Working

'If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and God will give him life for them that sin not unto death.'—1 John 5:16.

'Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works' these words in Hebrews express what lies at the very root of a life of good works—the thoughtful loving care we have for each other, that not one may fall away. As it is in Galatians: 'Even if a man be overtaken in a trespass, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness.' Or as Jude writes, apparently of Christians who were in danger of falling away, 'Some save, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear.' As Christ's doing good to men's bodies ever aimed at winning their souls, all our ministry of love must be subordinated to that which is God's great purpose and longing—the salvation unto life eternal.

In this labour of love praying and working must ever go together. At times prayer may reach those whom the words cannot reach. At times prayer may chiefly be needed for ourselves, to obtain the wisdom and courage for the words. At times it may be specially called forth for the soul by the very lack of fruit from our words. As a rule, praying and working must be inseparable—the praying to obtain from God what we need for the soul; the working to bring to it what God has given us. The words of John here are most suggestive as to the power of prayer in our labour of love. It leads us to think of prayer as a personal work; with a very definite object; and a certainty of answer.

Let prayer be a personal effort. *If any man see* his brother *he shall ask.* We are so accustomed to act through societies and associations that we are in danger of losing sight of the duty resting upon each of us to watch over those around him. Every member of my body is ready to serve any other member. Every believer is to care for the fellow-believers who are within his reach, in his church, his house, or social circle. The sin of each is a loss and a hurt to the body of Christ. Let your eyes be open to the sins of your brethren around you; not to speak evil or judge or helplessly complain, but to love and help and care and pray. Ask God to see your brother's sin, in its sinfulness, its danger to himself, its grief to Christ, its loss to the body; but also as within reach of God's compassion and deliverance. Shutting our eyes to the sin of our brethren around us is not true love. See it, and take it to God, and make it part of your work for God to pray for your brother and seek new life for him.

Let prayer be definite. If any man see *his brother sinning* let him ask. We need prayer from a person for a person. Scripture and God's spirit teach us to pray for all society, for the Church with which we are associated, for nations, and for special spheres of work. Most needful and blessed. But somehow more is needed—to take of those with whom we come into contact, one by one, and make them the subjects of our intercession. The larger supplications must have their place, but it is difficult with regard to them to know when our prayers are answered. But there is nothing will bring God so near, will test and strengthen our faith, and make us know we are fellowworkers with God, as when we receive an answer to our prayers for individuals. It will quicken in us the new and blessed consciousness that we indeed have power with God. Let every worker seek to exercise this grace

of taking up and praying for individual souls.[1]

Count upon an answer. He shall ask, *and God will give him* (the one who prays) *life for them that sin.* The words follow on those in which John had spoken about the confidence we have of being heard, if we ask anything *according to His will.* There is often complaint made of not knowing God's will. But here there is no difficulty. 'He *willeth* that all men should be saved.' If we rest our faith on this will of God, we shall grow strong and grasp the promise. 'He shall ask, and *God will give him life* for them that sin.' The Holy Spirit will lead us, if we yield ourselves to be led by Him, to the souls God would have us take as our special care, and for which the grace of faith and persevering prayer will be given us. Let the wonderful promise: *God will give to him who asks life* for them who sin, stir us and encourage us to our priestly ministry of personal and definite intercession, as one of the most blessed among the good works in which we can serve God and man.

Praying and working are inseparable. Let all who work learn to pray well. Let all who pray learn to work well.

1. To pray Thee confidently, and, if need be, perseveringly, for an individual, needs a close walk with God, and the faith that we can prevail with Him.

2. In all our work for God, prayer must take a much larger place. If God is to work all; if our posture is to be that of entire dependence, waiting for Him to work in us; if it takes time to persevere and to receive in ourselves what God gives us for others; there needs to be a work and a labouring in prayer.

3. Oh that God would open our eyes to the glory of this work of saving souls, as the one thing God lives for, as the one thing He wants to work in us.

4. Let us pray for the love and power of God to come on us, for the blessed work of soul-winning.

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[1] This thought is very strikingly put in a penny tract, *One by One*, to be obtained from the author, Mr. Thomas Hogben, Welcome Mission, Portsmouth.

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

XXX

I Know thy Works

'To the angel of the church in Ephesus—in Thyatira—in Sardis—in Philadelphia—in Laodicea write: *I know thy works.*'[1]—Rev. 2-3.

'I know thy works.' These are the words of Him who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, and whose eyes are like a flame of fire. As He looks upon the churches, the first thing He sees and judges of is—the works. The works are the revelation of the life and character. If we are willing to bring our works into His holy presence, His words can teach us what our work ought to be.

To Ephesus He says: *'I know thy works,* and thy toil and patience, and that thou canst not bear evil men, and thou hast patience and didst bear for My name's sake, and hast not grown weary. But I have this against thee, that thou hast *left thy first love.* Repent, and *do the first works.'* There was here much to praise—toil, and patience, and zeal that had never grown weary. But there was one thing lacking—the tenderness of the first love.

In His work for us Christ gave us before and above everything His love, the personal tender affection of His heart. In our work for Him He asks us nothing less. There is such a danger of work being carried on, and our even bearing much for Christ's sake, while the freshness of our love has passed away. And that is what Christ seeks. And that is what gives power. And that is what nothing can compensate for. Christ looks for the warm loving heart, the personal affection which ever keeps Him the centre of our love and joy.

Christian workers, see that all your work be the work of love, of tender personal devotion to Christ Jesus.

To Thyatira: 'I *know thy works,* and thy love and faith and ministry and patience, and that *the last works are more than the first.* But I have this against thee, that thou sufferest the woman Jezebel, and she teacheth and seduceth My servants.' Here again the works are enumerated and praised: the last had even been more than the first. But then there is one failure: a false toleration of what led to impurity and idolatry. And then He adds of His judgments: 'the churches shall know that I am He which searches the reins and hearts; and *I will give to each one of you according to your works.'*

Along with much of good works there may be some one form of error or evil tolerated which endangers the whole church. In Ephesus there was zeal for orthodoxy, but a lack of love; here love and faith, but a lack of faithfulness against error. If good works are to please our Lord, if our whole life must be in harmony with them, in entire separation from the world and its allurements, we must seek to be what He promised to make us, stablished in every good word and work. Our work will decide our estimate in His judgment.

To Sardis: *'I know thy works,* that thou hast a name to live, and thou art dead. Be watchful and stablish the things that are ready to die: for I have found *no works of thine fulfilled before My God.'*

There may be all the forms of godliness without the power; all the activities of religious organisation without the life. There may be many works, and yet He may say: I have found no work of thine fulfilled before My God, none that can stand the test and be really acceptable to God as a spiritual sacrifice. In Ephesus it was works lacking in love, in Thyatira works lacking in purity, in Sardis works lacking in life.

To Philadelphia: *'I know thy works,* that thou hast a little power, and *didst keep My word* and didst not deny My name. Because *thou didst keep My word,* I also will keep thee.'

On earth Jesus had said: He that *hath My commandments and keepeth them,* he it is that loveth Me. If a man love Me, *he will keep My word.* and My Father will love him. Philadelphia, the church for which there is no reproof, had this mark: its chief work, and the law of all its work, was, *it kept Christ's word,* not in an orthodox creed only, but in practical obedience. Let nothing less, let this truly, be the mark and spirit of all our work: a keeping of the word of Christ. Full, loving conformity to His will will be rewarded.

To Laodicea: *'I know thy works,* that thou art neither cold nor hot. Thou sayest, I am rich and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing.' There is not a church without its works, its religious activities.

And yet the two great marks of Laodicean religion, lukewarmness, and its natural accompaniment, self-complacence, may rob them of their worth. It not only, like Ephesus, teaches us the need of a fresh and fervent love, but also the need of that pov-erty of spirit, that conscious weakness out of which the absolute dependence on Christ's strength for all our work will grow, and which will no longer leave Christ standing at the door, but enthrone Him in the Heart.

'I know thy works.' He who tested the works of the seven churches still lives and watches over us. He is ready in His love to discover what is lacking, to give timely warning and help, and to teach us the path in which our works can be fulfilled before His God. Let us learn from Ephesus the lesson of fervent love to Christ, from Thyatira that of purity and separation from all evil, from Sardis that of the need of true life to give worth to work, from Philadelphia that of keeping His word, and from Laodicea that of the poverty of spirit which possesses the kingdom of heaven, and gives Christ the throne of all! Workers! Let us live and work in Christ's presence. He will teach and correct and help us, and one day give the full reward of all our works because they were His own works in us.

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[1] In the A. V. we find the words in all the seven epistles; according to R. V. they occur only five times.

Working for God

by Andrew Murray

XXXI

That God may be Glorified

‘If any man *serveth,* let him *serve* as of the strength which God supplieth: that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.’—1 Pet. 4:11.

Work is not done for its own sake. Its value consists in the object it attains. The purpose of him who commands or performs the work gives it its real worth. And the clearer a man’s insight into the purpose, the better fitted will he be to take charge of the higher parts of the work. In the erection of some splendid building, the purpose of the day-labourer may simply be as a hireling to earn his wages. The trained stone-cutter has a higher object: be thinks of the beauty and perfection of the work he does. The master mason has a wider range of thought: his aim is that all the masonry shall be true and good. The contractor for the whole building has a higher aim—that the whole building shall perfectly correspond to the plan he has to carry out. The architect has had a still higher purpose—that the great principles of art and beauty might find their full expression in material shape. With the owner we find the final end—the use to which the grand structure is to be put when he, say, presents the building as a gift for the benefit of his townsmen. All who have worked upon the building honestly have done so with some true purpose. The deeper the insight and the keener the interest in the ultimate design, the more important the share in the work, and the greater the joy in carrying it out.

Peter tells us what our aim ought to be in all Christian service—‘that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.’ In the work of God, a work not to be done for wages but for love, the humblest labourer is admitted to a share in God’s plans, and to an insight into the great purpose which God is working out. That purpose is nothing less than this: that God may be glorified. This is the one purpose of God, the great worker in heaven, the source and master of all work, that the glory of His love and power and blessing may be shown. This is the one purpose of Christ, the great worker on earth in human nature, the example and leader of all our work. This is the great purpose of the Holy Spirit, the power that worketh in us, or, as Peter says here, ‘the strength that God supplieth.’ As this becomes our deliberate, intelligent purpose, our work will rise to its true level, and lift us into living fellowship with God.

‘That in all things God may be glorified.’ What does this mean? The glory of God is this, that He alone is the Living One, who has life in Himself. Yet not for Himself alone, but, because His life is love, for the creatures as much as for Himself. This is the glory of God, that He is the alone and ever-flowing fountain of all life and goodness and happiness, and that His creatures can have all this only as He gives it and works it in them. His working all in all, this is His glory. And the only glory His creature, His child, can give Him is this—receiving all He is willing to give, yielding to Him to let Him work, and then acknowledging that He has done it. Thus God Himself shows forth His glory in us; in our willing surrender to Him, and our joyful acknowledgment that He does all, we glorify Him. And so our life and work is glorified, as it has one purpose with all God’s own work, ‘that in all things God may be glorified, whose is the glory for ever and ever.’

See here now the spirit that ennobles and consecrates Christian service according to Peter: ‘He that serveth (in ministering to the saints or the needy), let him serve *as of the strength which God supplieth.’* Let me cultivate a

deep conviction that God's work, down into the details of daily life, can only be done in God's strength, 'by the power of the Spirit working in us.' Let me believe firmly and unceasingly that the Holy Spirit does dwell in me, as the power from on high, for all work to be done for on high. Let me in my Christian work fear nothing so much, as working in my own human will and strength, and so losing the one thing needful in my work, God working in me. Let me rejoice in the weakness that renders me so absolutely dependent upon such a God, and wait in prayer for His power to take full possession.

'Let him serve as of the strength which God supplieth, *that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.'* The more you depend on God alone for your strength, the more will He be glorified. The more you seek to make God's purpose your purpose, the more will you be led to give way to His working and His strength and love. Oh! that every, the feeblest, worker might see what a nobility it gives to work, what a new glory to life, what a new urgency and joy in labouring for souls, when the one purpose has mastered us: that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

1. The glory of God as Creator was seen in His making man in His own image. The glory of God as Redeemer is seen in the work He carries on for saving men, and bringing them to Himself.

2. This glory is the glory of His holy love, casting sin out of the heart, and dwelling there.

3. The only glory we can bring to God is to yield ourselves to His redeeming love to take possession of us, to fill us with love to others, and so through us to show forth His glory.

4. Let this be the one end of our lives—to glorify God; in living to work for Him, 'as of the strength which God supplieth'; and winning souls to know and live for His glory.

5. Lord! teach us to serve in the strength which God supplieth, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory for ever and ever. Amen.